

THE ICE LENS

GEORGE
FREDERICK
GUNDELFINGER

Play



G. E. Stechert & Co.
Alfred Hafner
New York





THE ICE LENS

A FOUR-ACT PLAY

on

COLLEGE MORALS

(*Causes and Consequences*)

BY
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THE ICE LENS

“To give light to them that sit in darkness and in the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the way of peace.”

—Luke 1. 79.

“To awake in man and to raise the sense of worth, to educate his feeling and judgment so that he shall scorn himself for a bad action, that is the only aim.”

—Ralph Waldo Emerson.

“If there is ground for public criticism of individuals or of an institution, the criticism should be made in an open and manly way.”

—Henry Parks Wright.
Dean of Yale College, 1884—1909.

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“BRIGHT COLLEGE YEARS.”

LAST VERSE

Tune—“Watch on the Rhine.”

*In after-life, should troubles rise,
To cloud the blue of sunny skies
How bright will seem thro' memory's haze
The happy, golden, by-gone days!
Oh! Let us strive that ever we
May let these words our watch-cry be,
Where'er upon life's sea we sail;
“For God, for County, and for Yale.”*

—Henry Stewart Durand.

T H E
C H A R A C T E R S .

JOHN TEMPLETON.

ERNEST METCALF.

REGINALD BUCKINGHAM ADDDER.

CHAUNCEY EVERIT DEPYSTER.

RALPH LYON.

JEFFERSON LYON.

JEANETTE LYON.

MRS. DEARBORN HUNTER.

MRS. LYON.

JUPITER, *a sweep.*

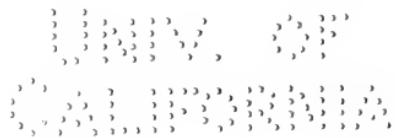
GUSTY, *a barber.*

GILES, *a bill-collector.*

MORRIS, *a butler.*

TWO CHILDREN.

STUDENTS AND TOWNSPEOPLE.



A C T O N E .

(The lens is focused.)

SCENE—The interior of a college fraternity dormitory on a Wednesday evening following a home victory in football.

A C T T W O .

(The sunlight passes through.)

SCENE—Same as Act One on the evening of the following day.

A C T T H R E E .

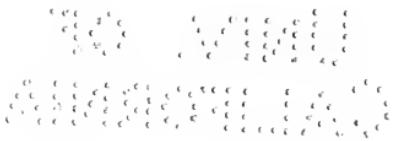
(The fire.)

SCENE—In the Lyon's den—a month or so later.

A C T F O U R .

(The lens unmelted.)

SCENE—On the mountain top in the Spring of the year.



ACT ONE

ACT ONE

(The lens is focused.)

The scene shows the interior of a college fraternity dormitory on a Wednesday evening after a home victory on the football field. The stage is divided into two parts—each part presenting a picture in deep contrast with the other.

The larger room on the left is the study of Adder and his roommate—DePyster. The prevailing atmosphere is that of the well-known “student’s sanctum” save that the “suspicious” articles have been temporarily stowed away. Every square foot of wall space is covered by a brilliantly colored pennant, a witty motto, or flashy poster. In the foreground, against the right wall, stands a couch piled high with pillows of all descriptions. Directly opposite, on the left, is an open fireplace filled with blazing logs. A bust of Shakespeare and several loving-cups adorn the mantelpiece over the fire. An exceptionally comfortable-looking Morris chair has been placed invitingly before the hearth. A small door on the far side of the mantelpiece opens into an adjoining sleeping-chamber. A similar door in view on the right

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wall at the far side of the couch gives access to a clothes-closet. A pair of larger doors in the rear of the room connect with a hallway. To the right of these doors, a bookcase filled mostly with magazines; to the left, a graphophone with the usual conspicuously large horn. One enormous dark blue banner, bearing the inscription For God, For Country, and For Yale in white lettering, hangs above the graphophone and immediately attracts the eye. The only window in the room is between this banner and the bedroom door; it is rather large and offers an unobstructed view of the street. In addition to several lights on the walls, a large dome hangs in the center of the room directly over a flat-top desk on which, among other articles, are a telephone, a large silver picture frame and a tobacco jar. A wastebasket stands to the right of the desk. There are several folding chairs placed here and there for the occasion—a reception in honor of the football victory.

Noticeably in the foreground, seated on one corner of the couch and toying with a pillow, is the ever popular Jeanette Lyon surrounded by all the young men in the room—some standing, some squatting on the floor, and Adder himself sitting on the couch beside her. Mrs. Dearborn Hunter occupies the Morris chair and is being entertained by DePyster who poses between her

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and the fire. Mr. and Mrs. Lyon are also among the guests, and there are several other girls who, owing to Jeanette's popularity, must content themselves with the conversation of the chaperons and the older married men.

Mr. Adder is a handsome, dashing, care-free young man of elegant physique with a malicious twinkle in his eye. Let it suffice to say that DePyster is a typical ass, in looks, in actions, in talk, in everything; he is lost in a gray suit many sizes too large, whereas all the other men are in formal evening dress. Jeanette Lyon is a rather pretty girl exquisitely gowned; she is somewhat frivolous but not bold. Mrs. Hunter is easily judged from the immodest gown which serves to exaggerate her unwieldy dimensions. These personal remarks are added to complete the picture. The characters in the background may be studied to better advantage in the later scenes where they figure more prominently.

The smaller room on the right of the stage is John Templeton's retreat. It is simply but neatly furnished. His bed stands against the right wall before a white-curtained window. Entrance to his room from the hallway is made through a door in the left wall. To the right of this door, a chiffonier with a mirror and a candlestick; to the left, a bookrack with numer-

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ous volumes. There is a desk in the center of the room; a desk chair in front of it, a larger lounging chair to the right and a wastebasket to the left. There is one electric light on the wall between the door and the chiffonier; a gas-lamp stands on the desk. As to pictures, they are few in number but refined in subject—framed prints of classical paintings including Da Vinci's "Mona Lisa," which hangs over the bookrack. The "Ninety-first Psalm" is placed at the head of the bed. The absence of glory decorations and the emptiness of the walls produce an air of freedom rather than an atmosphere of poverty. The room all in all suggests order, learning, piety and above all a beautiful and impressive solitude, which reaches us quite perceptibly in spite of the babble and clatter on the other side of the wall.

Templeton, in a lounging robe, sits writing at his desk.

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MRS. HUNTER

(glancing in the direction of the couch)

Isn't it nice to be popular like Miss Jeanette? All the young men swarm about her like bees around a honeysuckle. I held the same position in this town when I was a girl. The students used to call me the *belle charmeuse*, and many were the sirens I put to mourning entirely without effort and absolutely without intention.

(She sways her fan languidly.)

Of course I was some thinner then.

DEPYSTER

(with his usual affection)

Presumably the picket-fence variety of femininity had not yet introduced her meager dimensions into the realm of fashion.

MRS. HUNTER

(with a sigh)

Dear me. To be popular nowadays, one must be painfully slender. Nobody loves the fat woman.

DEPYSTER

Lament not. There are still some of us who take a great fancy to her jolly good nature finding ourselves quite indifferent to her corpulent superfluity.

MRS. HUNTER

(with elation)

Oh, Mr. DePyster, you are very kind; I do so much appreciate your sympathy.

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DEPYSTER

Forsooth, I see nothing *extraordinaire* in this Miss Lyon.

MRS. HUNTER

The reason is obvious—you have more brains than the ordinary youth. Darwin tells us that, among the Hottentots, obesity in woman is considered first in the estimation of her beauty, and the Hottentots, as you well know, are a very intellectual race.

DEPYSTER

Yes indeed. Wasn't it frightful how they were massacred in Paris on Saint Bartholomew's Day!

MRS. HUNTER

What a perfectly wonderful head you must have to remember it all! One could scarcely expect you to be interested in a girl like Jeanette; she is so shallow. It is only natural that you seek the more mature and learned woman, and if you can arrange it I shall be only too glad to have you spend some of your long winter evenings with me. You will not have to suffer the agony of the ordinary magpie who pretends to know so much but hasn't even read a single line from the Greek plays of Erysipelas.

DEPYSTER

I accept your invitation with keen delight.

(Jupiter appears at the rear door in the garb of a waiter.)

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JUPITER

Refreshments am served in dee billiard room.

DEPYSTER

Let me escort you to the table.

MRS. HUNTER

(*rising*)

Oh, Mr. DePyster, you are so gallant.

(DePyster, with Mrs. Hunter *hanging on his arm and gazing up into his eyes, leads the procession into the billiard room. All the other guests follow with the exception of Jeanette and her admirers. They, so deeply enwrapped in worshipping their idol, have failed to hear the dinner-call.*)

JEANETTE

(*rising and finding herself the only girl in the room*)

Oh! am I all alone with you men? How extremely unladylike! My chaperon needs reprimanding.

ALL

(*in unison*)

May I take you to dinner, Miss Lyon?

JEANETTE

Dear me, it's rather perplexing to decide. Let us settle it this way—I shall accept him who gives the best answer to my question.

ALL

Let's have it.

JEANETTE

Why is it you all give your attention to me alone

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when I tell you I would much rather you would give it to the other girls?

ADDER

(quickly)

Because you are Lyon.

(Strains of music float from the billiard room.

Jeanette takes Adder's arm, and they waltz out through the door. The others follow in defeat.

Templeton, after a while, takes up some loose sheets of paper from his desk, and walks about the room glancing them over. We see his face for the first time, and we see that it is strongly moral—the face of a man, young in years but mature in character, who has suffered in secret for his fellowmen,—suffered both from a thorough and painful study of their conduct and from a restless longing for their amelioration. We are not immediately fascinated by any quality in him corresponding to the almost audacious but seemingly admirable manner exhibited by Adder, and yet there is a certain charm to his Christian personality, which gradually grows upon us and holds our attention to his every move and utterance. He returns to his desk, takes up his pen, and makes a correction on his manuscript.

The music ceases, and considerable applause comes from the direction of the billiard room. In

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the midst of it, Ralph Lyon enters Templeton's room without knocking. Now that he is separated from the crowd we observe him more closely. His face, although strongly reminiscent of fine features, seems to be marked indelibly with the stamp of dissipation, and yet there is something about it which at least suggests the dormant existence of a better self. In contrast with the face of Templeton, it appears even fiendish at times.)

LYON

Pardon me. You don't mind my stepping in here a moment, do you?

TEMPLETON

(laying down his pen and paper)

Not at all; you are quite welcome indeed.

LYON

I am hunting a room free from women. These dinners, where they serve one with a lettuce leaf between two sheets of bread, and an olive on a toothpick, are too delicate for me. I came here to get at something more substantial. *(He removes a flask from his hip pocket and offers it to Templeton.)* Have a taste?

TEMPLETON

(politely)

No, thank you.

LYON

(slightly disappointed)

How's that?

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TEMPLETON

I don't happen to indulge.

LYON

You don't realize what you're missing, young man. (*He drinks and then smacks his lips.*) Great stuff that! (*He returns the bottle to his pocket, glances about the room, and then holds out an open cigar case.*) Smoke?

TEMPLETON

Thank you very much, but I really don't use them. Let me offer you a match. (*He passes him the matchbox on his desk.*)

LYON

(incredibly)

No drink! No smoke! What kind of a man are you? (*He takes a match, strikes it, lights his cigar, and sits in the large chair preparing for a comfortable smoke.*) Judging from the Ninety-first Psalm over your bed, I should guess you were a Sunday-school teacher.

TEMPLETON

(sitting in the desk chair)

Am I so good looking as all that?

LYON

How does it come you are not taking part in the reception to-night? You're a member of this fraternity—aren't you?

TEMPLETON

I carry its fellow-members—but not its Greek let-

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ters—next to my heart. (*then humbly*) I am merely a proctor here.

LYON

Oh, I understand; that is, you are here to condemn the boys if they come in at night with a drink or so too many.

TEMPLETON

I am here not to condemn them but to save them.

LYON

To save them from what?

TEMPLETON

From evil.

LYON

You call that evil, do you?

TEMPLETON

All excess is evil. I notice you say "a drink or so too many."

LYON

Well, I suppose they find it hard to stop when it tastes best.

TEMPLETON

Yes; it would be a great thing if we could master restraint. But there are always some poor unfortunate ones who stubbornly refuse to reason.

LYON

Fools, eh?

TEMPLETON

One could scarcely call them wise men.

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LYON

(fluently)

Decidedly. To sit down and drink until your head goes round as merrily as the good old world itself leaving all cares a mile behind—that's wisdom. And to have a pal whose capacity is exactly one glass more than he actually takes, a pal who is just about able to see you home—that's brotherhood.

TEMPLETON

A queer kind of brotherhood indeed where we associate with a man to share his senselessness rather than to reform him. This is not the true brotherhood of Christianity.

LYON

(holding up his hand)

Don't ring in religion! The separation of the real men from the solemn saints is the one great advantage of a college fraternity. We can't expect our sons to associate with grinds and angels. They must have recreation—not study. When we've got money we don't need brains; when we've got money and brains, it's selfish as well as foolish to use both. So we keep the money and the pleasure, and donate to the Poor the exclusive right to brain and work.

TEMPLETON

Without work there can be no pleasure—no real pleasure—no lasting pleasure, and there is more of that in the mere thought that we are doing some good for humanity—or even for ourselves—than there is in a whole cellar full of the rarest wine.

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LYON

(removing the ashes from his cigar)

I have a son—Jefferson—who tries to live up to that principle. He doesn't drink; he doesn't smoke; he turns away from men who do. He walks over my money as though it were mud. His one and only interest is missionary work. In fact he reminds me a lot of you, and I think he's a hell of a man.

TEMPLETON

(calmly)

He is your son.

LYON

The Lord only knows he doesn't inherit it from me. When I was his age I was next to everything worth while. I knew and practiced every known pleasure. I was, what my classmates called, a "heller."

TEMPLETON

How fortunate then that you should be favored with such a son.

LYON

Fortunate! Ha, he's the laughing stock of the town; his interest in missionary work and that only has made him so one-sided he can't walk straight, and constant study has reduced his face to the inside of an oyster shell.

TEMPLETON

And you believe this is due to application and learning?

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LYON

Yes; deep study is bound to change a man's face.

TEMPLETON

Bound to improve it. Have you never thought that perhaps your son came into the world fated with a deformed face and body? Those pleasures you had in your youth had to be paid for in some way. Nature always squares up her accounts, and usually the next generation has to suffer.

LYON

Nonsense! That's a footless theory. If Jefferson took a drink now and then and went out with the other fellows on their larks to have his blood warmed up, he'd be a different boy.

TEMPLETON

He may inherit your appetite; it may develop only too soon.

LYON

Not too soon for me.

TEMPLETON

And suppose he should fall victim to such habits. Then what?

LYON

Then he will have pleased his father.

TEMPLETON

Pleasing our parents by merely re-living their lives is such a narrow mission—in particular, when we are offered a nobler one.

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LYON

But he owes it to his father.

TEMPLETON

He owes his life—his all—to *our* Father, and it is He whom the son shall please. It is His character we should strive to repeat.

LYON

(mildly sarcastic)

Yes; all that sounds very nice, but it is we earthly parents who are bothered with the child until it reaches maturity.

TEMPLETON

That is the parental duty.

LYON

And the child should repay it.

TEMPLETON

Yes; to its own offspring. The world moves forward—not backward.

LYON

Then what's the use of having children?

TEMPLETON

It is not always the parents who wish them. Sometimes God sends them when they are not wanted, but they never come without a purpose which the parent will realize in time.

LYON

A purpose which is of no benefit to the parent.

TEMPLETON

Always, but perhaps indirectly. My dear man,

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children are born into the world, and not into families. This world needs all kinds of men. We have to get here some way; our parents are simply the medium through which we come. There is no choice in the matter—the sinner may beget the saint. After all, we are God's children, and as soon as we are strong enough to leave the mother's wing we should fly out into His heaven and do the work for which we have been created.

LYON

But think of it! a missionary!

TEMPLETON

The noblest ambition of all.

LYON

Ambition! I call that a rut.

TEMPLETON

They are one and the same thing. We all have to do something, and that some thing becomes our ambition—our rut. There is a road to salvation and a road to ruin—you will find ruts in both of them. It is no harm if our wheels get into these ruts; the only question is "Are we on the right road?"

LYON

What good is the right road if we stick there and rot?

TEMPLETON

Beautiful flowers spring out of the mould to illuminate the way for others.

LYON

(rising abruptly)

Hell! You're too damned poetic for me. If we

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should argue all night, I would still uphold that Jefferson is not the boy he ought to be, and that's why I put him in college. If I should ever offer a prayer, it would be that the other boys might lay hold on him and turn him into a man. I don't care what means they employ to do it. What he needs is goodfellowship, wine and—woman.

TEMPLETON

And you consider the promotion of these things the first purpose of a college?

LYON

Decidedly. What should it be? a workhouse?

TEMPLETON

A place of learning where we might acquire understanding and the higher Christian fellowship to prepare ourselves for service to God and His people.

LYON

You've got it worse than Jefferson. I thought I had him located in a house free from this infernal religious influence, but Holy Jerusalem! if here ain't St. Peter himself.

TEMPLETON

Your son will not be influenced by me. He is under the influence of a Power which is more than human. Perhaps you will understand me better when I say that he has been summoned by the Almighty Shepherd to rescue a lamb which has strayed from His fold.

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LYON
(*with a sneer*)

A lamb! Ha, ha,—you preachers are so damned considerate. Why don't you say outright what you mean? Instead of a lamb, call me a black sheep and be done with it.

TEMPLETON

The sheep only appears black from the darkness in which it walks. But it shall be cleansed and made white again. God has sent you one of those unwelcome children for the purpose of saving the soul of its own beloved father. That child has not taken up its cross in vain, for mark you! that father will soon open his eyes to the truth.

(Ralph Lyon *chuckles demoniacally and walks away. Before leaving the room he casts a scornful glance at Templeton, exhales a cloud of smoke from his cigar, and then closes the door with a slam.*

Templeton *returns calmly to his work on the desk. Jeanette Lyon, holding a plate and a napkin, enters Adder's room. He follows her likewise provided.*)

ADDER

At last I've got you alone.

JEANETTE

(*jumping on the desk, spreading the napkin across her knee, and nibbling at the food on her plate*)

And it is such a relief too. Dear me; it's almost a bore to be admired by so many. Now there's Mr.

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Brown; he said he was wild about me. Then Mr. Miller came along and said he was mad about me. And so on during the whole evening: Mr. Taylor said he was crazy; Mr. Wallace said he was daffy; Mr. Morton said he was dippy; Mr. Le Grand said he was simply sick. Now; what in the world are you?

ADDER

I've passed through all those stages long ago, and now I'm dead—dead in love with you, Jeanette.

JEANETTE

Well, you win the prize.

ADDER

What is it?

JEANETTE

(passing him her plate)

My lobster salad. I don't like it.

ADDER

(placing both plates on the desk)

Jeanette, I have never seen you look more beautiful than you do to-night!

JEANETTE

Be more explicit, Reginald.

(It must be frankly admitted that Jeanette Lyon is lovely to look upon. If there is a genuine and sensible soul under all her external finery, then, in this scene at least, her vainglory likewise prevents us from seeing it.)

ADDER

Your eyes are like two glittering stars in a celestial countenance.

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JEANETTE

Your language is perfectly angelic. Say some more—quick.

ADDER

Your cheeks are like the crimson glow on a woodland rose at sundown.

JEANETTE

That's immense. Go on.

ADDER

Your voice is like the song of the thrush in the early springtime.

JEANETTE

Exquisite! Exquisite! and my hair?

ADDER

Like golden brown leaves aflame with the mellow sunlight of a dreamy October day.

JEANETTE

(clapping her hands)

Glorious! and my new gown?

ADDER

A lacework of dewdrops clinging to the stem of a lily.

JEANETTE

Wonderful! Magnificent! *(She swings herself about in ecstasy on the top of the desk, and then the expression on her face changes very suddenly.)* I have sat in the mayonnaise; I know it. *(She jumps from the desk.)* Please examine me.

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ADDER

(standing behind her)

Oh! it has ruined your gown.

JEANETTE

(turning about on her heel, throwing her arms around his neck, and exposing the enormous grease spot)

I don't care as long as you love me.

ADDER

(with his arms about her waist)

Jeanette!

JEANETTE

You make me tingle all over with happiness.

ADDER

(removing a ring from his finger and placing it on hers)

And here's more of it.

JEANETTE

My engagement ring! Oh! isn't it a little dear!

ADDER

Dear? What is money to me? You shall have everything that money can buy. As I sit at my work with your picture before me (*He takes up the silver frame from the desk.*) here in the frame you gave me at Christmas time, I plan for the happy future I am going to provide for you. We shall live for months in the capitols of Europe; we shall have our summer villa on the shore of the Mediterranean; we shall visit Paris every season to renew your wardrobe; we shall be the guests of royalty.

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Your name shall head the society column of every fashionable paper; other women will look up to you in deep envy, while you, smiling with majestic scorn and frigid indifference, can ignore them one and all.

JEANETTE

(repeating her embrace)

You darling, darling fellow!

(Mrs. Lyon enters the room. She is attired for her carriage, and holds Jeanette's cape over her arm. It will not take us long to perceive that she is not the woman we might anticipate as the wife of Ralph Lyon. On hearing her speak, Jeanette and Adder quickly separate.)

MRS. LYON

Jeanette dear, I think we will have to be going now.

JEANETTE

So soon.

MRS. LYON

Your father ordered the car for ten o'clock; he seems to have forgotten it. Perhaps Mr. Adder will find him for us and tell him the car is ready.

ADDER

(placing the picture frame on the desk, and then leaving the room)

Gladly, Mrs. Lyon.

MRS. LYON

You were ready to leave—were you not, dear?

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JEANETTE

I am never ready to leave Reginald; he is so wonderful.

MRS. LYON

Yes, dear; all these men seem wonderful to us at first. We women lose our heads over them so easily. We should be more careful about allowing ourselves to become so intimate with them.

JEANETTE

Why this little sermon?

MRS. LYON

I chanced to see you in Mr. Adder's arms.

JEANETTE

What of that? I am already engaged to him.

MRS. LYON

(bewildered)

Engaged!

JEANETTE

Yes; he gave me the ring to-night. (*She holds out her hand.*) See what a beauty it is.

MRS. LYON

(pressing her daughter's hand)

I do not wish to make you feel unhappy, dear, but I believe this affair has ripened too quickly—it almost seems as though this ring has been picked up by accident in the street.

JEANETTE

(withdrawing her hand)

How absurd you are.

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MRS. LYON

It is only for your own happiness, Jeanette, that I express my opinion.

JEANETTE

You needn't bother about it in the least. Father and I have planned it all, and he has thoroughly investigated the matter of Mr. Adder's character and finds it absolutely faultless.

MRS. LYON

I am glad to hear it, dear, but I thought a mother, with her experience, should stand closer to her daughter in a case like this. Girls are so apt to act thoughtlessly and mistake some luring disguise for true love. I have often wished my mother had been living when such things troubled my youthful mind.

JEANETTE

Things have changed since then, and anyhow—Reginald is so wonderful, so perfectly wonderful. (Adder and Lyon *enter the door, the latter with his hat and gloves*. Jeanette *rushes forward to meet her father, displaying the ring*.)

Look, Dad. The ring! The ring! I know it will make you just as happy as I.

LYON

(*caressing her*)

Happy that my little girl is getting such an admirable and manly husband. (*He takes Jeanette's hand in one of his, and Adder's in the other. Then bringing them together he adds the usual:*) God bless you, my children.

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MRS. LYON

(trying to conceal a certain sadness)

Come along, Ralph; they've been holding hands all evening.

(Mrs. Lyon throws the cape gently over Jeanette's shoulders, and leaves the room. The others follow. The guests are seen nodding their "Good byes" in the hallway. Mrs. Hunter, in a black velvet cloak, steps into Adder's room with DePyster trailing after her like a pet dog.)

MRS. HUNTER

I must gaze again upon the spot where first I met you; never have I known a more remarkable man.

DEPYSTER

You really mean it, Mrs. Hunter?

MRS. HUNTER

Yes, indeed. I was once a student in Phrenology, and believe me, Mr. DePyster, I have never seen a more nobly shaped head. Your very ears are symbolic of supernatural intelligence; your mouth is expressive of determination, conscientiousness and individuality; your nose typifies benevolence, and your eyes are filled with the fire of love and passion. In fact, your entire physique is perfection personified.

DEPYSTER

You are the first woman to observe it in me.

MRS. HUNTER

Not every one can see it, Mr. DePyster. In order

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to see the great in you, one must forget all other men, and so few of us have that power of concentration. I have acquired it only after years of mental labor, and believe me, Mr. DePyster, I can think of you and at the same time have nothing on my mind.

DEPYSTER

It has been a great honor to have so marvelous a woman at our reception. I hope you have enjoyed yourself.

MRS. HUNTER

Alas! I never enjoy myself—but I have enjoyed you. Do come to see me often. Mr. Hunter will probably irritate you just as he does me, but we shall arrange it this way: Call us up on the 'phone. If Mr. Hunter answers—well, just say you're the fisherman. Then I'll come to the receiver. If I order bluefish—that will mean Mr. Hunter is *not* going to the Club. If I order lobster—that's you. Understand?

DEPYSTER

Perfectly.

MRS. HUNTER

Good night, Mr.—may I call you Chauncey?

DEPYSTER

'T would be a pleasure. Let me see you to your carriage.

MRS. HUNTER

Oh, Mr. DePyster, you are so gallant.

(She offers him her arm, and they strut out of the

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room. Adder returns. He lights a cigarette, and walks up and down the floor finally stopping at the desk and taking up the silver picture frame. While he is gazing at the picture, Jupiter enters to gather up the plates and napkins.)

JUPITER

(looking over Adder's shoulder)

She suttanly am a regulaar little queen, Mr. Adder,—dee most fascinatinest gal at dis here reception.

ADDER

I know what you're talking for, Jupiter. *(He reaches into his pocket and hands him a bill.)* Here's a V for working overtime.

JUPITER

Thank yah, sah. Thank yah, sah.

(Jupiter walks toward the door, and, still looking back at Adder, he naturally collides with DePyster who is just returning.)

DEPYSTER

Confound you, Jupiter; why don't you watch where you're going? You splattered that salad all over me—that's a clever mess, you silly ape.

JUPITER

(using the napkin)

Sorry, Mr. DePyster; very sorry.

DEPYSTER

Sorry be hanged! It wouldn't be so bad if it were *my* suit. Run along; you annoy me.

(Jupiter vanishes.)

THE ICE LENS

Poor Jupiter; he's such an ass. Well, Addy dear, we must congratulate ourselves on the success of our reception—I sure did cut a swell with your suit. Mrs. Hunter thought I was a dream.

ADDER

(still gazing at the picture)

Yes; she *must* have been asleep to think that.

DEPYSTER

Well, Addy dear, I know it doesn't fit me so very well—but what was I to do? My suit was at the pressers; they forgot to return it. I was really in a great dilemma—didn't know what to put on. But as I sat in profound meditation, the door bell vibrated—it was the errand boy with your new suit. So I just slipped into it. I knew it was scarcely the proper thing to wear, but it at least helped me to look conspicuous. I have so few idiosyncrasies, you know, that I must seek very ingenious devices for attracting attention.

ADDER

Well, you sure did it to-night, Chaunce. Miss Lyon told me you looked like a flat tire.

DEPYSTER

Yes; she punctured my feelings with the same remark. Of course I didn't care to have her know I was wearing *your* clothes, and yet I knew she might see you in them sooner or later. So I explained matters by saying that *my* tailor made a botch of his job and that I was going to sell *you* the garments at half price. Aren't I the clever liar, Addy dear?

THE ICE LENS

ADDER

Damn clever; you should have been a lawyer.
Consider youself as having won your first suit.

DEPYSTER

I say, Addy, have you another cigarette?

ADDER

No.

DEPYSTER

Never mind; this one will do. (*He removes the cigarette from Adder's mouth and begins smoking it himself.*)

ADDER

(*still holding the picture frame*)

What do you think of Miss Lyon, Chaunce?

DEPYSTER

(*blowing the smoke from one corner of his distorted mouth*)

She's just a mediocre girl; her face is very much against her.

ADDER

Against her?

DEPYSTER

(*covering his face with his opened hand*)

Yes; flat. I prefer the plumper variety—Mrs. Hunter for example.

ADDER

Mrs. Hunter! she's a regular old parrot.

DEPYSTER

Well, I don't exactly know what species, but I

THE ICE LENS

must admit she is a bird. I've made a date with her for the opera. Brilliant woman.

ADDER

Well, there's this objection to Jeanette: she's too damn refined. These educated girls are all right for the mother of a man's children, but for the instrument of his pleasure—it takes a girl like Lulu to deliver the goods.

DEPYSTER

Who in the devil is Lulu?

ADDER

(placing the frame on the desk and then closing the door)

Just met her last night for the first time. She's in town with the Mermaid Burlesquers, and does a dance in the last act that is certainly the cream of the season. *(He unlocks the desk drawer and produces a photograph.)* There; feast your eyes.

DEPYSTER

(with a whistle)

Hasn't she the peacherino of a figure!

ADDER

And you ought to see it wiggle in the spot light.

DEPYSTER

Wiggle? Say *oscillate*—it doesn't sound so vulgar.

ADDER

Chaunce, old boy, she just steps out on to the stage in that costume, and it's enough to bring down the whole house.

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DEPYSTER

Sure enough! she has a costume on; I hadn't noticed it.

ADDER

Just see how it fits her developments.

DEPYSTER

Ah! it's a blessing to be perfect. Mrs. Hunter was raving over my face and figure.

ADDER

Yes; they are enough to make anybody rave.

DEPYSTER

I say, Addy dear, has Lulu any other accomplishments aside from mere physical charm?

ADDER

Yes; she can drink like a fish. (*He produces an empty champagne bottle from the drawer.*) We emptied three of these last night. I kept this one for sweet recollections. See there; she has scratched her name across the neck with her diamond ring. She gave me that ring, and I gave her mine, and the joke of it all is that I handed hers over to Jeanette to-night in final settlement of our engagement.

DEPYSTER

Lord! if Jeanette knew that?

ADDER

(*tapping on the bottle*)

Mum's the word. You see, Chaunce, old boy, after all a fellow's really got to have two girls—one for week days and one for Sunday. Jeanette's my Sunday girl—my angel; Lulu's my little devil. Just

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look at her eyes! Compare the two faces: Lulu's has the dash and brilliancy of a brass band; Jeanette's is like the sweet strain of a violin slightly out of tune.

DEPYSTER

I told you it was flat.

ADDER

(holding up the two pictures, one in each hand)

Jeanette and Lulu—sarsaparilla and absinthe. When I take dinner with Jeanette, it's dry.

DEPYSTER

And when you take it with Lulu?

ADDER

It's extra dry. I tell you, Chaunce, she's irresistible; I'd follow her through fire.

DEPYSTER

You probably will.

ADDER

(taking another picture from the drawer)

Here's another one; a three-quarter view. But I prefer her full.

DEPYSTER

(holding the second photograph)

Scanty costume seems to be her long suit.

ADDER

She told me her manager thought the public wouldn't stand for that. So she added more to it by putting another plume in the hat.

DEPYSTER

Hasn't she the pretty elbows? They annoy me.

THE ICE LENS

I say, Addy dear, we must tack these up somewhere in the room.

ADDER

From now on, this one goes in Jeanette's frame every day but Sunday. (*He removes Jeanette's picture, puts it away in the drawer, and places Lulu's in the silver frame.*)

DEPYSTER

And the other one?

ADDER

On the mantelpiece with the rest of our trophies. Where are they? The hell with these receptions where you have to turn your room into a Sunday school. Bring out the decorations, and make things look like home. You get Fatima; she's behind my bed.

(*DePyster trots into the bedroom. Adder begins to whistle a merry tune; he opens the closet door and drags out a large box filled with empty bottles, steins, etc. He carries it across the room to the fireplace.*)

ADDER

(*taking up one of the empty bottles*)

King William! yum, yum. He who drinks whiskey shakes beer.

(*To make place for the bottle, he knocks the bust of Shakespeare from the mantelpiece sending it to the hearth in pieces.*)

That's such a stale joke.

THE ICE LENS

(He picks up the remains of the cast.)
I'm sorry I cracked it.

(He throws the pieces into the fire.)

Proved at last: Shakespeare is Bacon.

(With one sweep of his arm he clears the mantelpiece of the remaining articles and sends them to the floor. He then reads the inscription on the labels of the various bottles as he places them on the shelf.)

Monday night; Oct. 4th., with "Bud" Taylor, "Bunnie" Miller and "Jack" Allison.

(He takes a third bottle from the box.)

Oct. 5th; same bunch.

(a fourth bottle)

Oct. 6th.

(a fifth bottle)

Oct. 7th.

(a sixth bottle)

Oct. 9th. How's that? One missing.

(He scratches his head.)

Oh yes; that's the night we had the keg.

(He goes over to the couch and rolls a keg out from under it. He carries it on his shoulder, and places it on one corner of the mantelpiece putting steins and glasses on top of it. Then he stands off to get a good view of the entire display.)

Gala Week at the beginning of the fall term.

(DePyster enters carrying a large oil painting of a nude woman in a reclining position. He stands

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on the couch and hangs the picture above it at a careless angle.)

ADDER

She must hang straight, Chaunce, or the blood will run to her head, and we don't want her to get cold feet.

(DePyster straightens the picture.)

There, that's better. Now get Psyche; I rolled her under your bed.

(DePyster makes a second trip to the bedroom.

Adder takes a large "Keep Off The Grass" sign and hangs it directly below the painting. He tacks suggestive posters on the backs of all the doors. Then, returning to his supply box, he gets hundreds of empty cigarette boxes strung on twine. He puts them up like festoons reaching from the dome to each corner of the room. DePyster enters carrying affectionately in his arms a life-sized marble statue of "Psyche." He stands her in the center of the floor in front of the desk. Adder and DePyster each take one of her arms and, striking a majestic pose, they shout, "God Bless Our Home.")

ADDER

(glancing about the room)

Now that looks more like it—but I almost forgot the finishing touches.

(He produces a pair of pink stockings from the desk drawer, and hangs them up on either side of the dome.)

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DEPYSTER

Lulu's—I suppose.

ADDER

Sure thing.

DEPYSTER

Oh dear, how they annoy me. I say, Addy, I must have an introduction to this little Venus of yours. What 'o you say we go to the show to-night, and then take her down to the "Pink Pigeon?" I could be a sort of chaperon. All I'd care for would be to pat her once or twice on the elbow. Those dear little elbows! How they annoy me!

ADDER

Nothing doing in that line to-night, Chaunce.

DEPYSTER

You mean the mermaids have swum out of town?

ADDER

No; they are making their last splash this evening.

DEPYSTER

My last chance to see Lulu?

(He gets two overcoats from the closet. He puts on his own—an extreme English cut measuring about six inches across the shoulders and flaring copiously at the bottom. He places a ridiculously small hat on the top of his head. Then he holds out Adder's fur-lined coat to help him on with it.)

DEPYSTER

Jump in.

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ADDER

(filling his pipe.)

Not I, Chaunce.

DEPYSTER

Stop your bluffing, and come along.

ADDER

Sorry, old man, but I can't—I simply must not go.

DEPYSTER

What's come over you?

ADDER

(lighting his pipe)

I've got to study.

DEPYSTER

Study! the night after the football game—when the whole student body is down town celebrating! What the hell are you givin' me?

ADDER

(taking a letter from the drawer)

I mean it. Here, read this.

DEPYSTER

(solemnly placing Adder's coat on the couch)

Grandmother dead?

(He approaches the desk sadly until he recognizes the envelope.)

A letter from the Registrar! Rats!

(With a swing of his arm he knocks the letter from Adder's hand into the wastebasket.)

ADDER

I get my last crack at that exam tomorrow, and

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if I flunk I'm down and out.

DEPYSTER

Don't let that worry you. Have your old man come up and hot-air to the faculty, or tell him to present the university with a hundred thousand, and they'll let you in again.

ADDER

I've made arrangement with Metcalf to come around and tutor me to-night. He's going to pump enough dope into my belfry to get me through. Don't for a second think I would waste my own gray matter on such tommyrot as long as I can find a shark with his garret for rent. Poor devils; their heads are so crammed full of this nonsense they call knowledge that their tongues hang out for money. But then we rich must have our servants—the good Lord has even provided us with men to do our thinking.

DEPYSTER

If the possession of wisdom demands the decayed condition of these, then let me live forever in ignorance.

ADDER

As long as they're helping us to bluff our way through we've got to recognize them, but, aside from that, I would just as leave lift my hat to a worm in the gutter. You haven't seen my book anywhere, have you?

DEPYSTER

I haven't seen a book of any kind for the last month—except "Three Weeks."

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ADDER

(fishing a book out of the wastebasket)

Here it is. Now really, Chaunce, don't let me keep you away from the show if you want to go. *(then emphatically)* I am going to study.

(With equal emphasis, he plants the frame with Lu-lu's picture before him on the desk. Then he sits down with the book in his hand and the pipe in his mouth, but his eyes are on the photograph.)

DEPYSTER

You do look ususal with a book in your hand, Addy dear; a glass of Pilsener becomes you much better. Perhaps it's the pipe that spoils the picture. Let me see if it wouldn't be more harmonious without it.

(He removes the pipe from Adder's mouth.)

Much better; very much better.

(The pipe finds its way quite naturally to his own mouth.)

I wouldn't think of going to the show alone; I'm going to stay right here with you, old pal.

(He removes his coat and hat throwing them on the couch.)

I'm damn glad to see you take your studies so seriously, and believe me I wouldn't think of disturbing you.

(DePyster starts the graphophone to playing a dreamy waltz, and, taking the statue of Psyche in his arms, he dances noiselessly around the

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desk two or three times and then throws himself into the Morris chair puffing out volumes of smoke. There is a short silence, save for the graphophone, when Adder actually appears interested in his book. This silence is broken by DePyster.)

DEPYSTER

It will be so hard for me to die and never hear any more of this lovely music. Of course I won't mind the smoke so much.

(This remark falls on deaf ears. The graphophone stops playing; there is the familiar "scratching" at the end of the record, but neither boys make an effort to turn it off. After a while Adder reads aloud.)

ADDER

(reading)

A man, six feet tall, is walking away from a lamp post, ten feet high, at the rate of four miles an hour. How fast is his shadow moving?

DEPYSTER

The problem is absurd—no man with common sense would walk away from a lamp post.

(A band on the street strikes up the Yale football song—"Down The Field." DePyster rises instantly and throws open the window. The room is filled with cheers, and his face is aglow in the red light from the torches.)

ADDER

What's that?

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DEPYSTER

The Parade! The fellows are celebrating the football victory; I told you they would. Gee, what a jolly mob! I say, Addy dear, we can't sit here like two old men with the gout. Put on your old gray bonnet, and we will try that lamp post problem on the way home.

ADDER

Confound you, Chaunce; put down that window. I've got to stick to this book to-night.

DEPYSTER

Book be hanged! Have you no loyalty to show for your team? You're a hell of a sport—you sit here in a brown study while your classmates are painting the town red. It annoys me.

ADDER

Damn you; I can't come. I'll be dropped from college.

DEPYSTER

Who gives a rap? Jeanette? Well you've still got Lulu, and she'd be prouder of you than ever if you flunked every damned course in the curriculum. It's just 10.30—time for her dance in the last act. She's going through those little movements—everyone in the audience is cheering—the whole house is mad—and now she's looking for you in the front row—her eyes are calling out passionately for you to come. Are you going to say "no"? Like hell you are. Come along; don't be a quitter.

(DePyster again puts on his overcoat and hat, and

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executes a lively and sensual dance. The band seems louder; the red fire, brighter; the cheers, more spirited. He snatches one of the pink stockings from the dome, and dangles it before Adder's eyes in tempo with the music. Adder, under great temptation, squirms about in his chair. He finally succumbs, takes up Lulu's picture, covers it with kisses, returns it to the desk, and then dons his hat and overcoat.)

ADDER

You've got me, Chaunce; you've got me, old pal; we're in for one hell of a good time.

(They throw their arms about each other, join in on a loud war cry, and rush to the door. On opening it, they find Metcalf standing on the threshold with a book under his arm.)

DEPYSTER

(aside)

Damn.

ADDER

(politely removing his hat)

Good evening, Mr. Metcalf. I have decided not to tutor to-night. Here's the money for the time I reserved with you. *(He passes him the fee.)* We think it will do us more good to grind out the lesson for ourselves, so we are going over to Dick Thomson's room on the campus to study together. *(to DePyster)* Don't forget the text book, Chaunce. *(to Metcalf)* Good night, Sir.

(Adder bows very properly. DePyster takes the book

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under his arm, and both boys leave the room where the lights are left on and the window open. They close the door.

Templeton has been writing at his desk ever since Lyon left him and closed his door on the scenes which we have witnessed in the meanwhile.)

TEMPLETON

(responding to a knock on his door)

Come in.

METCALF

(entering Templeton's room)

Hellow there, Templeton.

TEMPLETON

(rising)

Why, you are almost a stranger here.

METCALF

(shaking hands)

I just dropped in to tutor young Adder, but he has decided to work out the lesson with a classmate. They will learn more by it. I never thought they took such a personal interest in their studies. I'll have a better opinion of them after this.

(At this instant, the text book comes flying in through the open window in Adder's room. There is a prolonged cheer from the street, and then the noise dies away as the parade moves on.)

The students are certainly doing the town up in great shape to-night.

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TEMPLETON

If they would show one half the enthusiasm in their studies, we would have a wonderful university.

METCALF

There would be no more need for instructors, and I'd get my walking papers. But I suppose it was a great game; you can't blame them for feeling their oats. I wish I could be half as happy. *(He lets his book slip from under his arm to the floor, and throws himself despondently into the large chair.)*

TEMPLETON

(sitting)

Why, what is the matter, Metcalf? You seem low in spirits.

METCALF

(glancing about the room)

You're a free man; I envy you. You can thank your stars you don't have to red off the supper table, put on diapers, and wash dishes.

TEMPLETON

Why don't you get a maid?

METCALF

Maid! I'm lucky I have enough money to keep the kids in shoes. Look at that hat. *(He throws his shabby derby on the desk.)* I bought it at a second-hand store for a quarter. I haven't smoked a decent cigar since the youngest arrived, and the only amusement I get is a moving-picture show at

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the nickelodeon once a month when my salary check comes around.

(It is true that Metcalf's appearance justifies De-Pyster's remark on his "decayed condition." It is due however to his clothes only; otherwise he is entirely human.)

TEMPLETON

Well surely you didn't go into teaching with the idea of making money? You knew in advance that the pay was poor. Teaching is reserved for the man who has married a bank account.

METCALF

Rats! Ours wasn't a financial deal. I was lonely for a true companion, and I married Kate because I loved her.

TEMPLETON

Yes; that is considered a very common mistake. Nowadays the faculty teach for love and marry for money.

METCALF

Nowadays the faculty don't teach at all. Teaching is entirely out of date; it has been replaced by the "research mania"—a disease where the victim is consumed by a ravishing desire to produce articles for collecting the dust in our libraries. Write a twenty-page pamphlet which nobody—not even yourself—can or needs to comprehend, and every line of it adds a dollar to your salary. But put your effort on teaching something that everyone can and should understand, and you're a disgrace to your university.

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TEMPLETON

Come, come, it is not so bad as all that. There is nothing disgraceful about a small income.

METCALF

It is not only income; it is recognition. We teachers who are trying to rescue the multitude from a sea of ignorance are looked down upon by these research gods whom the university places on pedestals, and for whom they erect million-dollar temples in which to hatch their butterfly eggs. Let us be frank; now who is the greater benefactor? The man who goes on investigating either something footless or something superintellectual (there's not much difference between them) or the man who imparts to humanity those things which have already been discovered and found useful?

TEMPLETON

Of course you can not deny the nobleness of experiments resulting in the general welfare and progress of the race.

METCALF

Decidedly not. But what has the world gained through the discovery that there are always two million and one hairs on a cat's tail, or that Shakespeare never ate mutton? Rot! What the world needs to know is that two and two make four, and it should be the office of a college to provide with a respectable income those men who are teaching it. The American public always has been an easy mark: they believe that the money they pay out as tuition for their sons at college procures for them the best pos-

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sible educators. They are not aware of the fact that Old Tiddledewinks, for example, who lectures to one solitary disciple on some highfalutin meander of his lopsided mind sits there and rakes in his five thousand a year, while the man who hands out common-sense to over a hundred of their sons doesn't draw the salary of a New York policeman.

TEMPLETON

Don't consider it an injustice until you consider other things aside from money. It is not what we get out of this world; it is what we do to improve it that counts.

METCALF

That counts for what?

TEMPLETON

That counts toward the greatest of all possessions—happiness. Aren't you improving mankind by your teaching, and aren't you rewarded happily for doing it? If you think these more highly paid souls are happy, you are much mistaken. There they sit surrendering their whole lives deciphering the yellow wormy pages of some Hebrew manuscript, fondling the dead bones of some prehistoric skeleton, inhaling the offensive fumes of virulent chemicals, and alternately exciting their thirst for worldly fame with stimulants, then quenching it with deadly narcotics. Be merciful; don't begrudge them their salary. It is all they have to console them in their miserable solitude.

(He rises and pats Metcalf firmly on the shoulder.)

THE ICE LENS

Wake up, Metcalf;
get on your knees, and thank God you have a home
that rings with children's laughter.

METCALF

But the children must be fed?

TEMPLETON

Give them lots of fresh air and a banana now
and then; they'll grow.

METCALF

It is easy enough for *you* to look at the bright
side of things.

TEMPLETON

It is easy enough for anyone. All we have to
do is to turn the dark side away.

METCALF

That's more easily said than done.

TEMPLETON

Then look for an instant at something darker,
and you will soon find that your own isn't so black
after all. Think of the coal digger who descends
with his family into a mine, and never gets a
glimpse of daylight.

METCALF

(*rising to take Templeton's hand in both of his own*)

That has made me feel happier than I have in a
long while.

TEMPLETON

That's the proper spirit. The life of a married
man with a modest income and a healthy family

THE ICE LENS

isn't so gloomy after all, is it? Perhaps you did marry too soon. Yet who knows but that you avoided a greater mistake by doing so. Thank God the children your wife has brought into the world are blessed with a pure birth and a clean father. The world stands badly in need of such children.

METCALF

I don't see you doing anything in that direction.

TEMPLETON

There is another love which this world needs even more than nuptial love. God only knows there are enough neglected children whom the childless may well take under their wings for guidance. Not only children, but men—men without reason whose parents, through ignorance, are unable to pilot them. These must be saved and conquered with that love we call "Fraternity."

METCALF

Settlement work in other words?

TEMPLETON

No; the poorer people are happier than we think they are. They are forced to labor, but they enjoy the fruits of it. It is the people of means who, having had all provisions of life made for them, become idle and indulge in pleasures which eventually lead to misery far deeper than the pain which any poverty-stricken mortal has yet experienced.

METCALF

The social evil? Abolish that? We might just as well try to teach elephants how to knit.

THE ICE LENS

TEMPLETON

I am not referring to the destruction of the full-grown weeds; it is the seed that should be destroyed.

METCALF

The seed?

TEMPLETON

Yes; and we need not wander far to find it. It is here—here in our midst—where the seed of most of that misery is planted. It is here—here at the great American university where the Well-to-do send their sons.

METCALF

It sounds like a sweeping statement.

TEMPLETON

But it is as true as it is unfortunate. If a man has lived a clean and moral life in college, he will continue to live it the rest of his days. But he is just at that age where it is only too easy for him to fall into the jaws of corruption by taking one careless step, and in consequence he is rendered unfit for his work not only in college but in life after graduation.

METCALF

(sitting down again)

You interest me; continue.

TEMPLETON

The appetites developed in youth linger and grow more intense. The man become coarse and evil-minded: he is intoxicated by the sight of a bottle; he commits adultery when he looks at a woman;

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he ruins the happiness of his family by urging his son to follow his footsteps and by treating his wife and his daughter with the same disrespect as the wanton on whom he feeds.

METCALF

What has started you on this path? Have you been playing the spy and making discoveries?

TEMPLETON

No, Metcalf; I am not "unearthing wickedness with a spade." It isn't necessary to dig for hidden evidence. When the ruddy face of youth grows pale and thin, when the eyes grow dull and slimy, when the hand trembles,—isn't that evidence enough?

METCALF

You do observe, don't you?

TEMPLETON

(sitting)

Yes; you are too deeply concerned with your own petty misfortune to notice this. But here, Metcalf, is real misfortune which brings grief to the heart of God himself.

METCALF

Do you lay all the blame on the students?

TEMPLETON

No; I shall say this in their defense: they are still children. Our student body isn't very far in advance of a kindergarten. Like children, they lack minds of their own and think they must imitate others in their habits; like children, they will pick

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up almost anything off the street; like children, they never know when they have enough.

METCALF

Everyone of them should be tied to a nurse's apron string.

TEMPLETON

It should concern the parent rather than the nurse. The fact that we are sending our sons away to college and placing their discipline in their own hands is no matter for pride and elation. We are simply starting them out on that unfamiliar road which soon divides—the one way leading to service, righteousness and glory; the other to indolence, corruption and ruin.

METCALF

You mean the parent sees and hears only the brighter side of the son's college career?

TEMPLETON

Fathers who have gone through the same experience take pride in exposing their sons to the tempting pleasures which they believe make the man, but mothers, sisters and sweethearts know nothing of these darker events, and picture the young men only as heroes of wisdom and virtue. They are blind, blind, blind.

METCALF

Perhaps it is better so. Would you have them burdened with all the worry such knowledge would inevitably bring?

TEMPLETON

It would not bring worry; it would fan and

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brighten the flame of maternal love which is being gradually extinguished by the fads and follies of modern society. Mothers lose track of their boys too soon; the boys are not so quick at doing wrong if they think their mothers know of it.

METCALF

Well, aren't college morals occasionally attacked in our newspapers and periodicals?

TEMPLETON

And immediately denied or made light of in a subsequent issue.

METCALF

By whom?

TEMPLETON

By various persons. Sometimes by university officials who are striving to uphold either falsely or ignorantly the moral standing of their institution; sometimes by good-natured optimists who resent the exposure of evil; again by individuals who themselves are victims of immorality, and who fear a further publication of their own deeds.

METCALF

And others there are, I presume—scores of them—who remain in silence but know only too well the hidden truth.

TEMPLETON

One way of preventing discord is not to play on our pipes, but I fail to see how we extol our Alma Mater by trying to conceal the deadly elements which are tending to undermine her foundation.

THE ICE LENS

There must be a reform. I long for it; I crave for it.

(Templeton *rises and paces the floor restlessly.*)

METCALF

Why do you let it prey on you? Are you responsible for the sins of others?

TEMPLETON

Yes; I am—at least, when I feel that I have done nothing to try to prevent them.

METCALF

It's no affair of yours; let them go to the dogs if they wish to.

TEMPLETON

If they wish to? Do you believe these men are actually willing to throw their lives away? Far from it. There is a better self in every one of them which is crying out for help and strength, and no man who would be a Christian can ignore it and pass by them on the other side.

METCALF

Isn't there a God to answer their cries?

TEMPLETON

Omnipotent as He is, we expect too much of God alone. He needs our co-operation. He gives us the use of His own power, but we fail to exercise it, and we sit with folded hands waiting for adjustment and progress in exchange for mere confidence devoid of individual exertion. It is true, Metcalf, that this reform must come mainly through the students themselves, but college administration can do its share.

THE ICE LENS

METCALF

Yes; I believe you are right after all. It is high time we unbend our knees to research idols and intellectual polliwogs, and turn our attention to the needs of the undergraduate for whom—all said and done—a university really exists.

TEMPLETON

We are graduating from our institution too many men who are undeserving of the degree we confer upon them. A large number of them manage to get through somehow or other, and enter their life's work with false insignia on their extended chests. The real scholar who has earned his laurel by consistent study has gained nothing over him who has usurped it by trickery.

METCALF

Education nowadays is little more than a farce; we are expected to make scholars out of men whose ambitions are no higher than toadstools. I propose that we confer two degrees: one to reward attainment in scholarship—call it the A. B. indicating “Ambitious Benjamin;” the other for social equipment—the B. A. indicating “Bragging Archie.”

TEMPLETON

What we really need is more learning and less display: we crowd our campus with stately buildings which serve rather for ornament than for education; we emblazon our faculty with the names of renowned men whom our students never meet; we adjust our requirements so as to graduate an os-

THE ICE LENS

tentatively large number in consequence of which the quality is lowered.

METCALF

True enough. A university should be something more than a set of self-centered specialists assembled on a square mile of beautiful architecture where young men are trained to pass four years of recreation with three ounces of knowledge.

TEMPLETON

Its one great purpose should be the moulding of upright citizens for the future, but this service can never be rendered until we raise the standard of scholarship.

METCALF

That is, you hold that by raising the standard of scholarship, we will raise the moral standard as well.

TEMPLETON

Yes. Economy is a rigid law of Nature, and the average man will do no more than our low standard demands of him. With surplus time on his hands, he naturally seeks pastime and alas! he finds it in vice. Rectitude is worth more than all of Newton, Vergil and Euclid put together, but these may well be a means to that end by replacing unhealthful thought in the youthful mind.

METCALF

I fear we should have a task suppressing in youth "The Call of the Wild."

TEMPLETON

That should not be our intention. A weak set of

THE ICE LENS

humans we would be had we neither spirit nor appetite, but it is our struggle to purify and limit these, that makes us strong and lifts us above the animal level.

METCALF

It will take something more startling than Euclid to agitate such a struggle.

TEMPLETON

I am not claiming it will result from study alone. We must take hold of the man and stir up the better self which has stagnated in the recesses of his soul. He needs a brother to take his hand, to lead him out into the light where he can see with his own eyes the animal which grovels behind him in the darkness—a coarse inhuman brute living selfishly and sluggishly on the hoard of others, stealing what little it has acquired for itself only by cunning and concealment, everlastingly consuming weeds, quaffing more than its body can hold, and reveling like a glutton over human flesh. Were such habits intended for man, they would not result in defeat, misery, disease and crime. But to give up the beast, to use the reason and will which is given to man alone, to grasp the higher purpose in life for the betterment of ourselves and our fellowmen, to serve in the promotion of decency, wisdom, justice and righteousness; in a word, to serve God—that is victory, that is happiness, that is life.

METCALF

You are enthusiastic; but how can this light be given to the many who need it.

THE ICE LENS

TEMPLETON

I am trying to shed it by writing a play.

METCALF

But at the same time, you are exposing that which may bring anguish to many an innocent heart which is now apparently happy.

TEMPLETON

Temporary sorrow is the bud which blossoms into true happiness. There is no real happiness in the deferment of grief. This evil, like the poisonous plant in the depth of the forest, will thrive and spread until it is brought out into the sunlight of an open meadow. However intense the pain, I shall cut deep with the knife of truth, bring the poison to the surface, and heal the wound with the balm of love.

METCALF

Your task requires courage. Have you no fear?
(*He rises.*)

TEMPLETON

Fear! Why should I hesitate to do what is right and necessary? Is it not my very love for my university that prompts me to show that her morals should be and will be rectified, that her standards must be elevated? Is it not the fraternal devotion in my aching heart that compels me to arouse among her students a hatred for all that is wrong, and a greater respect for themselves, their intimates, their Alma Mater and their God? Why should I fear to act on that which He has inspired within me. (*He*

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points to the psalm above his bed.) "He shall cover thee with his feathers and under his wings shalt thou trust; his *truth* shall be thy shield and buckler."

METCALF

But men there are so destitute of character that they will not admit their own faults, and, when their acts are plainly and justly made known by others, they will *burn* with revenge, and that revenge may result in your downfall.

TEMPLETON

It is possible to make from ice a lens which will project images with sufficient magnification to show clearly many a defect unobserved in the original by the ordinary eye. Rays of sunlight passing through this lens can be so focused as to kindle a fire although the lens itself is left whole and unmelted.

METCALF

(taking his book and hat in his hand)

I see you have gone into it body and soul. *(He grasps Templeton's hand.)* Good night, and God be with you.

(Metcalf leaves the room, closing the door softly behind him.

Templeton stands in silence for a few moments.

Then he removes his robe, takes his white night clothes from the chiffonier, places them on his bed, and turns off both lights in his room.

The front door of the house opens and closes with a slam. There is a noise due to two men staggering up the stairs. The door to Adder's room

THE ICE LENS

is opened violently, and he staggers in badly under the influence of liquor—his cap missing; his hair disarranged; the front of his dress shirt open. DePyster, comparatively less sober, follows behind, closing the door noiselessly. Adder discards his coats on the floor, and manages to reach the fireplace where he accidentally knocks a few bottles from the shelf sending them to the hearth with a crash.)

ADDER

(sinking into the Morris chair)

Thank stars! We are back, Chaunce. That was the closest shave I ever had, but I can always depend on you, old pal, to seeing me home. You're a good fellow, Chaunce; you're a damn good fellow. And you were a damn lucky fellow to know about that back window. I almost broke my neck when I jumped to the pavement.

DEPYSTER

I wonder what's become of Lulu?

ADDER

Don't worry about Lulu. I guess this isn't the first raid she's been in; it's an old game with her. Hell! I wish the little devil were here to put me to bed.

(He rips off his dress shirt, and then removes his shoes throwing them noisily across the floor.)

Can you blame me, Chaunce? Can you?

DEPYSTER

Nay, nay; I say she's a pippin. I never shall forget her elbows.

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ADDER

Cut out the elbows, and get my pajamas, will you?

(DePyster *carefully feels his way into the bedroom.*

Adder rises and approaches Psyche, first eyeing her with suspicion, and then embracing the statue vulgarly.)

Oh, you Lulu; oh, you Lulu.

(*He carries the statue across the room, and falls with it in his arms upon the couch. DePyster returns with the pajamas.*)

Come kiss me good night, Chaunce.

DEPYSTER

Yes, Addy dear.

ADDER

And come around later; I may want you to hold my head.

(DePyster *covers Adder with the pajamas and then gives him an audible kiss.*)

DEPYSTER

Pleasant dreams.

ADDER

Good night, old pal.

(DePyster *staggers to the bedroom door, and, turning the switch there, he extinguishes all the lights in the room. He enters the bedroom, and Adder, left to himself, soon commences to snore beastlike on the couch.*

Templeton, sensitive to all that has happened, lights

THE ICE LENS

the gaslamp in his room, and stands thoughtfully at the side of his desk in his white night clothes. The expression on his face reveals a profound compassion for the transgressor.)

ADDER

(talking in his sleep)

Lulu, you damn little witch!

(The strains of "Bright College Years" are heard from the band in the distance. The countenance of Templeton, inspired by the music, changes suddenly to one significant of determination and courage. He seizes his pen, and, trembling with enthusiasm, he bends over his desk and writes with renewed vigor.

Adder, in his drunken stupor, remains unconscious of the approaching tumult. Just as the music, swelling in grandeur, reaches the final strain—"For God, For Country and For Yale"—, the procession passes under the window in his room, and a patch of brilliant red light falls across the large banner bearing that inscription.)

ACT TWO

ACT TWO

(The sunlight passes through.)

The scene is the same as in Act One; the time is the evening of the following day.

Adder's room is again in order: the folding chairs have been removed, and the broken glass from the bottles has been swept away. But all the decorations, including one pink stocking on the dome, are still up.

DePyster, with his head in a bandage and his body in a very "loud" robe, sits toasting in the Morris chair before a crackling fire. He is all alone with Psyche who stands before him buttoned up in his own black coat, which covers her anatomy from the waist to the knee.

Templeton's room is vacant, but the electric wall light is on; the gaslamp on the desk is not burning.

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DEPYSTER

(calling)

Jupiter, Jupiter, Jupiter. *(no response)* Confound his soul; he's never here when I want him. Jupiter, Jupiter.

(Jupiter slips in on tiptoe.)

JUPITER

I begs yah pardon, sah. Did I hear yah callin' me, or did I only imagine it?

DEPYSTER

You never hear anything. Where in the devil have you been?

JUPITER

I's been shinin' shoes, sah.

DEPYSTER

Send up some heat; the house is like a refrigerator. I had to build a fire myself. I soiled my hands fearfully, and almost broke my spine carrying the logs. It's no work for a gentleman—in particular when he's sick. You had better stay on your job. If you don't fire that furnace, we'll fire you. When I awoke this morning, my feet were like ice.

JUPITER

Why didn't yah git up, sah, and walk around a bit—yah might 'ave stoved yah toe.

DEPYSTER

No joking. Don't make sport of my complaints: I'm sick as a cat. Hand me my pipe and Mr. Adder's tobacco jar.

THE ICE LENS

(Jupiter passes him the articles from the desk.)

I've got such a nasty taste in my mouth.

JUPITER

Dark brown?

DEPYSTER

(filling his pipe)

Yes; ever had it?

JUPITER

It's my natural color, sah.

DEPYSTER

(passing him the jar)

Here, take this; it annoys me.

JUPITER

(placing it on the desk)

You mean it jars you.

DEPYSTER

Got a match?

JUPITER

(getting one from his pocket)

Yes, sah.

DEPYSTER

Strike it for me; I'm too weak.

JUPITER

(holding the burning match over his pipe)

Yes, sah.

DEPYSTER

That's all; you may go now. You annoy me.

JUPITER

(leaving)

Yes, sah.

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DePYSTER

Jupiter.

JUPITER

(returning)

Yes, sah.

DePYSTER

I'm as hungry as a pup; go over to Reilly's and get me a "dog."

JUPITER

Five cents, sah.

DePYSTER

Have it charged.

JUPITER

With mustard, sah?

DePYSTER

No; with gunpowder.

JUPITER

(leaving)

Yes, sah.

DePYSTER

Jupiter.

JUPITER

(returning)

Yes, sah.

DePYSTER

On your way, stop at the barber shop, and tell Gusty to come over and shave me.

JUPITER

(leaving)

Yes, sah.

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DEPYSTER

Jupiter.

JUPITER

(returning)

Yes, sah.

DEPYSTER

And drop in the drug store, and get me two of
Lydia Pinkham's Pills.

JUPITER

(leaving)

Yes, sah.

DEPYSTER

(to himself)

Poor Jupiter—silly ass.

JUPITER

(returning)

Will I have dem pills charged too?

DEPYSTER

(angrily)

Yes, sah.

(Jupiter leaves the room briskly. DePyster rises and walks toward the graphophone.)

Oh! such a spinning headache.

(He starts the graphophone with a noisy two-step, and then returns to his chair. After a while the door bell rings. It rings a second time long and loud.)

Some people have

no consideration for the sick.

(The laundry man appears in the doorway. He

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raps on the door frame. It is not heeded. He raps a second time.)

DEPYSTER
(feebley)

Come in.

MAN
(entering)

Is this Mr. DePyster?

DEPYSTER
(neither rising nor turning about)
No; he's out of town.

MAN

Would you mind giving him this bill when he returns?

DEPYSTER
Gladly! just leave it on the desk.

MAN

Thank you. (He does so and walks out.)

(DePyster rises, walks to the desk, picks up the bill, and, without having looked at it, he tears it up, and throws the scraps into the wastebasket. The laundry man returns.)

MAN

I'm sorry, but I gave you the wrong bill. It was Mr. Adder's. May I trouble you to hand it back?

DEPYSTER
(excitedly)

Oh, that's all right; he rooms here too, and I'll see that he gets it.

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MAN

But there's a mistake—I forgot to add last month's account.

DEPYSTER

Never mind doing that. What's the total? I'm his roommate; I might just as well pay the entire bill for him.

MAN

(opening his memorandum)

2.67.

DEPYSTER

I'll write out a check.

(He sits down at the desk with a business-like air, opens the drawer, produces a check book, writes with a flourish, tears out a leaf, and hands it to the agent.)

MAN

(looking over the check)

Good signature, Mr. DePyster; might just as well make out another one—your bill is 17.32.

(A sheepish look appears on DePyster's face. He writes a second check. The agent takes it, and places the received bill on the desk.)

Thank you. Good evening, Sir.

(The man walks out.)

DEPYSTER

(slamming the door after him)

Damn.

(He stops the graphophone abruptly, walks to the

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desk, and picks up the telephone in anger.)

Chestnut 23; . . . Hellow . . . hellow . . .
Is this Hunter's residence? . . . (then all in one breath) Tell Mrs. Hunter this is the fishman, and he can't take her to the opera until the beginning of next month because he has overdrawn his allowance.

(He drops the telephone noisily, throws himself into the Morris chair, and smokes his pipe in quick short puffs.)

Adder enters in the best of spirits. He tosses his cap and book on the couch.)

ADDER

Well, old pal, how are you feeling?

DEPYSTER

(with a snarl)

Rotten.

ADDER

So bad as all that?

DEPYSTER

Yes; my head's aching like sixty, and my backbone's almost killing me.

ADDER

Oh hell! you should have gone to Vassar.

DEPYSTER

What makes you so crabbed? Did you flunk your exam?

ADDER

Flunk! well I guess not. Jeff Lyon sat right in front of me, and when he finished his paper I jerked

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his coat tail and pointed to my frat pin. He did his duty, and passed back a copy of all the answers. The supervisor snored through the whole examination—I had to wake him up when I handed over my paper.

DEPYSTER

Anything on about the lamp-post problem?

ADDER

Not a damn; the nearest thing to it was about a schooner sailing homeward.

DEPYSTER

Could you answer it?

ADDER

I swallowed it whole.

DEPYSTER

Then you feel sure you passed?

ADDER

Without a doubt.

DEPYSTER

And you won't be dropped?

ADDER

Nay, nay. (*He dances happily about the room.*) There are two ways to get through college, Chauncey; one is to paddle your own canoe, and the other is to have someone paddle it for you. You'd be surprised to know the number of bone heads floating about the country with a college degree dangling from the end of their tongues. Look at yourself for example—repeating your freshman year for the third time. You should have been kicked out of

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this place before you ever got in. But you'll graduate—I'll bet my head on it. Why the faculty will get so damned tired of you hanging around that they'll give you your sheepskin and tell you to beat it.

DEPYSTER

And you with all your brains won't get anything better.

ADDER

A degree no longer stands for brains; it has become an essential part of every gentleman's wardrobe just like a patent-leather pump or an English walking-stick. A fellow's a damn fool to study his head off when he can get one without it. To hell with books. (*He snatches his book from the couch, tears out the leaves, and tosses them into the fire.*) Me for a jolly good time. Seen the evening paper? (*He removes a newspaper from his coat pocket.*) Great write-up about the raid last night—front page—large red letters—but no names given.

DEPYSTER

Lucky for you, old man. You would have had a fine time adjusting matters with Jeanette.

ADDER

Little Innocence, she'll never know a word about it.

DEPYSTER

Don't be too sure. Remember her brother—Jefferson—lives right here with us under the same roof.

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ADDER

What of it? Do you think he's going to squeal?

DEPYSTER

There's no telling what he might let slip from his lips. He is such an ass; he annoys me.

ADDER

I know damn well he's a sad bird, but I had good reasons for making him a member of our fraternity. In the first place he belongs to one of the first families of the state, and therefore his election to our frat gives us all a social pull; in the second place, by doing this, I myself get a better stand-in with his sister Jeanette—the most popular debutante in town; in the third place he's under pledge as a good fellow not to let out the off-color doings of any of his brethren. So you see, Chaunce, I've got him just where I want him—I can do anything I damn please, and Jeanette never knows it and thinks just as much of me as ever.

DEPYSTER

Does Jefferson know about our lark last night?

ADDER

No, but I'm going to tell him the whole thing from beginning to end.

DEPYSTER

I think you're a fool to do it.

ADDER

You're showing the wrong spirit, DePyster. Aren't we all united? Isn't it agreed there shall be no secrets among us? If we expect Jeff to be our

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pal, it's up to us to be his. I may be a cheat when it comes to an exam, or I may be false to the girl, but this much I swear: To my dying day I'll be loyal to my frat.

DEPYSTER

Well, when you tell him, please don't mention my name in the matter. My mother would turn over and die if she would ever find out that her darling Chauncey as much as looked at a chorus girl. I was considered the most upright man in my home town, and the first time I left for college Mamma placed a Bible under my arm.

ADDER

She was trying to make a saint out of you.

DEPYSTER

She used to preach to me for hours, and I always promised to be a very, very good boy.

ADDER

Thank heavens, my mother never took such a foolish interest in me. She is head over heels in society: president of The Women's Club, vice-president of The Mother's Club, secretary of The Home of Neglected Children, and so forth. She writes articles on *The Care of French Poodles*. Has four of them at home: (*He counts them on his fingers.*) Florette, Peepo, Melisande and Napoleon. Feeds them on marshmallows and certified milk; bathes them in *eau de Cologne*. Some class to mother! As to my old man, we've gone out together on many a lark with something ten times as spicy as

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Lulu. Parent's up to date—eh! And after all, what good has *your* mother's Bible done?

DEPYSTER

I sold it for cigarette money.

ADDER

Holy smoke!

DEPYSTER

A week later, Mother wrote and asked me if I had found the five-dollar bill she had placed opposite the ten commandments in the fifth book of Moses.

ADDER

Rather expensive cigarettes—eh?

DEPYSTER

I had to tell her I lost Bible and all.

ADDER

What was the answer?

DEPYSTER

Another Bible.

ADDER

Any money in it?

DEPYSTER

As soon as it arrived I turned over every page from Genesis to Revelation, and didn't find a damn cent, and what was worse—I couldn't even sell this one.

ADDER

How's that?

DEPYSTER

There it is in the book case. Look what's stamped all over the cover in gold.

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(Adder walks to the book case, finds the Bible, and blows a cloud of dust from it.)

ADDER

(reading the inscription on the cover)

To Saintly Chauncey DePyster from the Y. M. C. A. of Oswego.

DEPYSTER

(rising and pacing up and down the floor)

They must not find it out. They dare not find it out—their saintly Chauncey patting the elbows of a chorus lady! The very thought annoys me.

ADDER

(throwing the Bible down on the desk)

Hell! you're worse than an old woman—they are always taking their medicine before they are sick.

DEPYSTER

Believe me: Jefferson Lyon cannot be trusted. He will gossip it everywhere, and even tell the heathens about it when he commences his crusade in China. Addy dear, you've made me sicker than ever. Oh!.....

(DePyster throws himself on the couch.)

(Gusty—the little fat and immaculate German barber—enters in his slippered feet. He carries a long pipe in his mouth and a satchel in his hand.)

GUSTY

Ver is it vat vants a shave?

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ADDER

(pointing to the couch)

The Dying Gladiator.

(He retires to the bedroom.)

GUSTY

*(opening his satchel on the desk and getting out his
razor, shaving soap, brush, towel, etc.)*

Kome along, Hercules.

DePYSTER

(rising)

I think I'll have to postpone it, Gusty. I've got a fearful headache, and I'm a nervous wreck. I'm afraid you'll cut me.

GUSTY

(taking off his coat and rolling up his shirt sleeves)

Dat's all right; I vas got a saf-e-ty razor to use on your beard. Your head vill feel a lots better after I takes it off.

DePYSTER

*(sitting in the Morris chair where Gusty prepares
him by pinning a towel about his neck)*

Now remember, Gusty, my skin is soft and sensitive, and I don't want the barber's itch.

GUSTY

*(mixing a lather on DePyster's face, and dabbing
his brush back and forward as though he were
painting the side of a house)*

Don't verry about dat; I mix every man's ladder in his own individual mug.

(Jupiter enters with small packages.)

THE ICE LENS

JUPITER

Here am yah dog sandwich and yah pills, Mr. DePyster.

DEPYSTER

Bring it quick; I am almost famished. And get me a glass of water.

(*Jupiter hands him the sandwich, and then enters the bedroom. DePyster devours it with a large amplitude to his jaw. He eats lather and all.*)

GUSTY

Ven your jaws goes up and down like a pump handle, how do you exsphect me to amputate your fringe?

DEPYSTER

I'll be through directly, Gusty. You might sit down and read a little while; there's my Bible on the desk.

GUSTY

Make hurry up; I vas got no time to vait. *Ach Himmel!* I must make more ladder on your face. You seem to like vipped cream served mit your dog.

(*Gusty re-lathers DePyster's face. Jupiter returns with a glass of water, places it on the desk with the pills, and then goes out into the hall.*)

GUSTY

(*commencing operations with his safety razor*)

How old is dis beard?

DEPYSTER

I'm twenty so the beard must be twenty too.

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GUSTY

I tot so; I vondered if you had so much life in you
as your beard?

DEPYSTER

Ouch!

GUSTY

Vat's da matter? Is dis razor a little bit too
much not sharp enough?

DEPYSTER

It's got a pull.

GUSTY

Sure ding—it's a Gillette. Say, you vas had da
chicken pox once, *nicht wahr*?

DEPYSTER

How do you know?

GUSTY

It played da deuce on your face—it left two
spots.

DEPYSTER

Cut it out, Gusty; I don't feel like laughing.
Anyhow, your jokes are far-fetched.

GUSTY

Far-fetched? I found dat one right here under
your nose. You vant a massawtch?

DEPYSTER

No; they annoy me.

GUSTY

Hair cut?

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DEPYSTER

No; the hairs get under my collar and tickle my back.

GUSTY

Shampoo?

DEPYSTER

No; the soap suds might get into my eyes.

GUSTY

Dandruff treatment?

DEPYSTER

No; I detest the smell of it.

GUSTY

You need one—your hair has had a falling-out-ness. You will be bald in t'ree years. *Ach Gott! dann was für ein Bild.*

DEPYSTER

Stop talking French; I never took it—I specialized in German.

GUSTY

You collitch boys know about as much German as a jackass.

DEPYSTER

It would be foolish to learn more than my position in life demands.

(*Gusty, laughing to himself, enters the bedroom.*

DePyster rises, walks to the desk, swallows the pills, and then takes a drink of water.)

God bless Lydia Pinkham; I'm going to send her a testimonial.

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(He returns to the Morris chair. Gusty enters with a steaming towel. He wraps it around DePyster's head covering his face completely. Then he removes a watch from DePyster's pocket, and puts it into his own.)

GUSTY

(aside)

Ein Ingersol, aber besser wie nichts. (He removes the towel.) Is der nudding else I can relieve you of?

DEPYSTER

No; that will be all for to-night, Gusty. I'll pay you next week.

GUSTY

(packing his supplies back into his satchel, and pulling on his cap and coat.)

Dat's all right. I am used to doing work on tick, but I vill keep a vatch on you. Adieu.

(He walks to the door singing:

"Ich bin der Doctor Eisenbart—

Zwill-ie-will-ie-wick-um-BUM."

After the final "BUM," he turns about, quickly puts his hand to his nose, and disappears.)

DEPYSTER

(remaining in his chair and calling to Adder in the bedroom)

Addy dear, I'm feeling just as bad as ever. Would you mind bringing me my black tie and a clean collar? And one of my handkerchiefs with a pink monogram?

THE ICE LENS

ADDER

(from within)

All right, Grandma. Anything else?

DEPYSTER

My derby.

ADDER

What about your corset cover?

DEPYSTER

(mournfully)

Please don't make sport of me. I feel as though I'm going to die.

(Adder enters and showers the called-for articles of apparel over DePyster. He himself wears a black suit and a derby.)

ADDER

Just where does it hurt you most, Darling?

DEPYSTER

I am still sick over it.

ADDER

Over what?

DEPYSTER

The fact that you're going to tell Jefferson about our frolic. Perhaps you'll change your mind.

ADDER

No; I'll call him in now. (*He goes to the door and calls.*) Hellow Jeff, drop in a moment on your way down. (*to DePyster*) Jeff isn't going to be a half-bad fellow when we get through with him.

THE ICE LENS

DEPYSTER

Yes; there's hope when one stops to consider the man you've made of me.

(We meet Jefferson Lyon for the first time. He enters the door timidly. His father's heartless description of him is not far from the truth. His deformity is pronounced; his face is thin and cadaverous, appearing all the more so on account of his black suit, tie and derby; his hands tremble, and his entire body occasionally undergoes a nervous twitch. Our hearts ache for him at once.)

ADDER

Hellow Jeff, how's the boy?

JEFFERSON

(removing his hat, and placing it on the desk)
I'm feeling pretty fair. How are you?

ADDER

Fine; but Chaunce has had a bad day of it.

DEPYSTER

(putting on his collar and tie before the mirror over the mantelpiece)

I thought I was going to die this morning, Jeff. I've been too ill to stand the strain of a recitation, but I'm strong enough to go with you all to-night.

ADDER

Chaunce had one drink too many.

DEPYSTER

I wasn't drunk, Jeff; I never get drunk. But all these fancy drinks make me deathly sick.

THE ICE LENS

ADDER

We were out on a lark last night, and Chaunce still has a hangover. We both had a hell of a good time, Jeff, with a chorus girl and the usual accessories that go therewith. The grand climax of the evening was a police raid, but we managed to skin out. We are going to take you with us the next time, Jeff.

JEFFERSON

I would rather not go, Adder.

ADDER

Why?

JEFFERSON

I think it's immoral.

ADDER

Rats, Jeff! you'll have to get over that. There isn't a fellow in the house who doesn't take a drink now and then, except you. You owe it to us and to yourself. Learn to be a good fellow. Forget your grouch.

DEPYSTER

Yes; be manly.

JEFFERSON

I do not wish to be disagreeable at any time, and I will gladly retire from the crowd when you start your carousals. But it isn't the drink so much as the girl that I am referring to.

ADDER

In what way, Jeff?

THE ICE LENS

JEFFERSON

I believe you and my sister—Jeanette—are on more than friendly terms these days. I know Jeanette is taking you seriously. Do you think you are treating her fairly?

ADDER

Yes.

JEFFERSON

Then she knows about these occurrences?

ADDER

No; decidedly not.

JEFFERSON

Don't you think she should know?

DEPYSTER

(removing his black coat from the statue of Psyche)

How could a gentleman be expected to disclose such a thing to a perfectly respectable girl?

(He puts on his coat and hat, and sits on the arm of the chair)

JEFFERSON

Aren't you going to tell her, Adder?

ADDER

No.

JEFFERSON

Would you rather I would tell her?

ADDER

(quickly)

You had better not, Jeff.

JEFFERSON

Why not? As her brother it is my duty to do so.

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ADDER

As *our* brother it is your duty to keep quiet. Remember your pledge. You're not going back on your word, are you?

JEFFERSON

Do you think I shall let my sister step into an unhappy future when I can prevent it?

ADDER

Unhappy future! Hell! don't make it so damned serious. It's part of every fellow's college life; you're not human like the rest of us.

JEFFERSON

I'm sorry, Adder, but I simply cannot see my sister misled.

ADDER

(revengefully)

Well, just squeal, and I'll make it hot for you.

JEFFERSON

How?

ADDER

What about that help you gave me on the exam to-day?

JEFFERSON

You forced me to do it. I didn't want to, but you kept on whispering and pulling my coat and jabbing your pencil into my back until you had me almost crazy, and I passed back my paper only to get relief.

ADDER

That's all right; whether I asked you for it or

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not, you did it all the same, and the man who gives information is considered in the same light as the man who gets it—both are fired from the school. Now what are you going to do?

JEFFERSON

What do you mean?

ADDER

I mean that if you squeal to Jeanette on me, I'll squeal to the faculty on you. It's only a fair game, Jeff.

JEFFERSON

But you also would be expelled?

ADDER

I don't give a damn. It's not going to harm me, but it's a hell of a fine reputation for a man who's going into the ministry.

DEPYSTER

(rising, walking to the window, and pulling down the shade)

Lord! I should say so.

JEFFERSON

You don't mean you would ruin my future?

ADDER

Yes, and I want your answer right quick on this matter between Jeanette and me. I want your promise that you'll keep it dark.

JEFFERSON

You want me to let my sister go on blindly in her relation to you?

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ADDER

Yes, or consider yourself expelled from the university.

JEFFERSON

My God, man, you wouldn't do that, would you?

ADDER

It's easy enough for you to prevent it.

JEFFERSON

You think it is easy for me to lie?

ADDER

You're not lying—you're simply doing me a good turn.

JEFFERSON

I cannot, Adder; my God, I cannot.

ADDER

Very well, we'll call it settled—I'll hand in the report to-morrow.

JEFFERSON

No, wait—

ADDER

(seizing his hand and placing it on DePyster's Bible)

Good! We are going to have your promise. Here swear by this Bible that you're not going to tell.

(He removes his derby.)

JEFFERSON

(holding up his hand reluctantly)

My God, my God, I.....

(He falters and falls to the floor in a faint.)

THE ICE LENS

ADDER

(stooping over him)

Get the brandy bottle, Chaunce; he has fainted.
(DePyster *opens a secret panel in the desk. He produces a bottle and a glass, fills the latter, and passes it to Adder, who places it to Jefferson's lips forcing him to drink. He comes to.*)

ADDER

(helping him up and leading him to the couch)

There, old man; you're all right again. Lie down and rest a while. You needn't go with us to-night if you don't feel like it. I'll go down and unlatch the front door, and if you need attention just call up the doctor on the telephone.

(The door to Adder's room and the door to Templeton's room open simultaneously. Adder and DePyster pass out closing the door upon Jefferson who is left alone on the couch. Templeton enters his own room leaving the door open. He removes his overcoat and felt hat, places them on his bed, and then sinks into the large chair where he is soon lost in meditation. Jefferson rises from the couch.)

JEFFERSON

What kind of men are these I live with? They have no respect for God or truth. They even try to force lies from me.

(He places his hand to this throat, and coughs lightly.)

And when I refused, they drugged me.

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(His mind, not any too strong, gives way to hallucination.)

Yes; they've drugged me. I know it. I know they have, and they have left me here alone to die.

(He staggers to the desk, and seizes the telephone.)

Greenwood, 3443.....Hellow.....hellow. It is you, Jeanette. This is Jefferson.....Send me help; quick, Jeanette!....I have been drugged, poisoned.....I am here all alone at the dormitory in Mr. Adder's room. Send me help. Quick!

(He drops the telephone, and, supporting himself on the desk, he stares blankly into space. Adder and DePyster return, closing the door.)

ADDER

Well, Jeff, you're feeling all right again I see.

JEFFERSON

(covering his eyes with his hand)
Somewhat.

ADDER

(patting him on the back)

You're a good fellow, Jeff; you've sworn loyalty to us by the Bible.

JEFFERSON

(quickly)

No; I did not swear by the Bible.

ADDER

Oh yes, you did.

JEFFERSON

I was going to, but I didn't do it; I know I didn't.

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ADDER

Sure you did. You just can't remember. You fainted while you were doing it, old pal—here's DePyster to prove it.

(He gives DePyster the wink.)

Isn't that right, Chaunce?

DEPYSTER

Decidedly; most decidedly.

JEFFERSON

You mean to say I have sworn by the Bible that I will not show my sister her blind mistake? Oh, how I hate myself.

(He covers his face with his hands, and then suddenly removes them.)

No; it was not Jefferson Lyon who swore. You drugged me—you made me do it while I was under influence—you know you did.

ADDER

That was only the brandy we gave you to get you out of your faint.

JEFFERSON

Brandy!

ADDER

Yes; you've had your first drink now, and you're the beginning of a good fellow.

JEFFERSON

(terrified)

Brandy! Brandy!

THE ICE LENS

ADDER

Yes; brandy. It will do you good.

JEFFERSON

Good? You don't understand, Adder; you have played the meanest of tricks.

ADDER

Trick?

JEFFERSON

Yes. Oh God, if you had only known it. It's hidden in me, Adder; it's born in me—a burning desire for drink. I have tried so hard to keep away from it (*He sobs pitifully.*) and that is why I wanted to be a missionary so I could work at the side of God and forget my wretched thoughts. I believed I had succeeded in conquering the evil, but you have brought it upon me worse than ever. I tell you I am ruined—I see them before me now—mocking friends tempting me to follow them—they have won me over—I, who intended to work for God and truth, have been reduced to a drunken and a lying fool.

I have sworn to Him above that I shall deceive my own sister. (*He lowers his head in shame.* Adder *shakes hands with DePyster.* Jefferson *quickly looks up.*) Don't be too sure of your victory, Adder. When one of God's mediums is destroyed, He soon finds another one to herald the truth. (*Templeton at this instant awakes from his reverie, and places his hand over his brow.*) Jeanette shall still be saved but not by me. I have surrendered myself

THE ICE LENS

to temptation. I am yours; do with me what you will.

ADDER

(placing the derby on Jefferson's head)
Come along; it is just two minutes of eight.

JEFFERSON

I will go anywhere to take my mind off these horrible thoughts; I will do anything to forget my misery.

ADDER

Then fill up the glasses, Chaunce, and we will all three drink to the health of our good old fraternity.

(DePyster quickly gets two more glasses from the secret panel, and soon has them filled and passed around.)

ADDER

(holding up his glass)

We're here to revel, smoke and drink—

To hell with work that makes us think.

(Adder and DePyster watch Jefferson closely. He hesitates at first, and then, overcome by his desire, he lifts the glass madly to his lips, and drains it of its contents. Then Adder and DePyster drink. Jefferson hurls the empty glass across the room into the fireplace, and bellows out a peal of maniacal laughter. Adder and DePyster mistake it for the laugh of goodfellowship, slap him on the back, and, taking him arm in arm, they leave the room.)

The town clock strikes eight. On the first stroke,

THE ICE LENS

all the electric lights, including the wall light in Templeton's room, are extinguished. With the shade drawn in Adder's room, it is now in complete darkness except for a very dull glow on the hearth due to the dying fire. Templeton's room is but faintly lighted by the street light shining through his window. On the last stroke of the clock, the footsteps of the departing fraternity are heard as they march in strict tempo through the hall, down the steps, and up the street. The sound gradually dies away in the distance.

There is a short period of absolute silence during which Templeton remains seated. Then the flicker of a match in the darkness. He lights the gaslamp on his desk, and when he turns about, he sees Jeanette Lyon standing in his doorway. She is bare-headed, and wears a magnificent fur automobile coat. Her hairdress is extreme, a false addition projecting grotesquely in the rear and interlaced with a garland of dazzling jewels. Her usual attractiveness is even surpassed owing to the excitement which has flushed her cheeks.)

JEANETTE

(nervously)

Pardon me, Sir, but this is the only room which seems to be lighted, so I am coming right in. My brother—Jefferson Lyon—has been drugged here in this dormitory.

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TEMPLETON

You must be mistaken; I think you are in the wrong house.

JEANETTE

No; he called me on the 'phone, and said he was in Mr. Adder's room.

TEMPLETON

It sounds queer, but we shall light a candle and see.

(He lights the candle on his chiffonier, and crosses the hall, Jeanette following. They enter Adder's room. As Templeton walks by the desk, he jerks down the pink stocking from the dome before she has had chance to observe it. He stuffs it into his coat pocket. They walk to the bedroom door, and both look in.)

TEMPLETON

You see the room is vacant; your brother isn't here.

JEANETTE

I cannot understand it.

TEMPLETON

Very likely it was intended for a joke; this is Halloween, you know.

JEANETTE

Of course I am glad it is not so, but I really can't see why he should play such a trick. I was frightened to death. I ran the car up here all myself, and I am so nervous, I am afraid I can't run it home.

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TEMPLETON

You had better come into my room, and rest a little.

JEANETTE

Thank you, I will.

(They return to Templeton's room. He blows out the candle, and returns it to the chiffonier. She sits down in the large chair beside his desk.)

JEANETTE

May I have a drink of water? My throat is parched from excitement.

(He opens the window, and gets a glass and a water bottle from the sill.)

Jefferson is a trifle queer, but he has never done anything like this before.

(He pours out the water, and hands it to her. She drinks, and places the glass on the desk.)

Thank you. Where do you suppose he is now?

TEMPLETON

(returning the bottle to the sill)

This is Thursday evening; they call it frat night, I believe.

JEANETTE

But why are there no lights in the house?

TEMPLETON

It is just a custom; at eight o'clock the switch is turned off.

JEANETTE

Oh yes, this is the night they hold sacred—they

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all wear black clothes, and march into those mysterious buildings to offer prayer.

TEMPLETON

Prayer!

JEANETTE

Yes; they pray until midnight, and then they march out again, pure and sweet, with all their sins forgiven—that's what Mr. Adder told me.

TEMPLETON

You must not believe all you hear.

JEANETTE

Then what is it they do in those dumb-looking houses?

TEMPLETON

These little school boys have their secrets—just like you girls.

JEANETTE

You can't blame me for being curious. Can you?

TEMPLETON

No; you would be a curious girl if you were otherwise.

JEANETTE

But students do silly things; don't they?

TEMPLETON

Yes indeed; almost as silly as girls do—

JEANETTE

How rude you are to make the comparison.

TEMPLETON

I trust I have not offended you.

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JEANETTE

No; not exactly. You see I am not accustomed to even the slightest slander. Everybody admires me.

(She feels her hair to see if it is in place.)

(In this scene we have Templeton in a lighter mood.

He undertakes to bring Jeanette Lyon to her senses. He commences playfully using more or less good-natured ridicule, but always resorting to moderation when his subject appears in the least offended.)

TEMPLETON

(sitting down at his desk and turning his chair so as to face her)

And you like to be admired, do you?

JEANETTE

(sitting up in her chair in great expectation)

I am perfectly silly about it.

TEMPLETON

May I ask you what that means? "perfectly silly"?

JEANETTE

Oh—don't you know?

TEMPLETON

I will look it up in the dictionary to make sure.

(He takes a book from his desk, and turns over a few pages.)

Perfect—that means "complete."

(He turns over a few more.)

Silly—that means "brainless."

THE ICE LENS

(He closes the book, and returns it to the desk.)
That is: you say you are "completely brainless."

JEANETTE

I didn't mean that at all.

TEMPLETON

Of course not; but your diction is absurd, isn't it? Rather affected?

JEANETTE

No; it is my natural way of speaking. I always make it a point to have nothing artificial about me.

TEMPLETON

(reaching over and removing a puff from her hair)

What about this?

JEANETTE

I think you are perfectly horrid—but you have wonderful eyes to observe it. My hairdresser worked on them for two weeks to get the proper shade; I thought it was an awfully stunning match.

TEMPLETON

(placing the puff on his desk)

Do you think they are becoming?

JEANETTE

Whether they are or not, I must be up to date.

TEMPLETON

Rather than sensible?

JEANETTE

Well, how would you expect a girl to wear her hair?

THE ICE LENS

TEMPLETON

(pointing to the print over the bookcase)

Are you familiar with the portrait of Mona Lisa?

JEANETTE

What a youthful face she has! I wonder what secret she had to preserve it.

TEMPLETON

Simply this: she never marred her natural beauty with all the artificial devices with which you girls of to-day disfigure yourselves.

(He picks up the puff.)

Do you see

anything like that in her hair?

JEANETTE

People would laugh at me if I wore my hair like hers.

TEMPLETON

Are you quite sure some of them do not laugh at it as it is?

JEANETTE

If they do, it is because they don't know the very latest style.

TEMPLETON

Style is not always taste; a little conservatism often saves us from becoming fashion freaks.

JEANETTE

(slightly agitated)

You think I look like a freak; do you?

TEMPLETON

I saw a girl walk down the street to-day, and I

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almost called out the department of public safety—I thought a wild hyena had escaped from the zoo.

JEANETTE

(with greater agitation)

Then you think I look like a hyena?

TEMPLETON

No; you are not so dangerous looking as she. You are somewhat human—more on the order of a chimpanzee.

JEANETTE

(furiously)

I almost hate you.

TEMPLETON

Now come; let us be reasonable. Just walk over to the mirror, and see how much all that protruding hair in the rear resembles a monkey's cranium.

JEANETTE

(starting toward the mirror and then stopping suddenly)

I don't care to see it.

TEMPLETON

I don't blame you.

JEANETTE

(examining the Mona Lisa more carefully)

If I should wear my hair like that, my face would look like a jelly-fish.

TEMPLETON

Oh! Let us not get into such deep water. Your face is far better than you think it is. You really

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spoil it, not only with all that false hair but also by powdering your nose.

JEANETTE

(quickly)

How do you know my nose is powdered?

TEMPLETON

You are trying to hide a freckle. *(He holds up his finger.)* Now aren't you?

JEANETTE

Yes; because men don't like to see freckles on ladies' noses.

TEMPLETON

If you are really worth loving, that insignificant little freckle isn't going to keep any man with common-sense from doing it.

JEANETTE

(from behind the desk)

If I am really worth loving! Why of course I am.

TEMPLETON

What makes you think so?

JEANETTE

Everybody loves me; all the young men stand up before me and shout their praises.

TEMPLETON

And you believe all they say?

JEANETTE

Most certainly; you should hear the way they say it. It's simply glorious.

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TEMPLETON

I wonder if it is anything more than flattery.

JEANETTE

You mean they are playing me false?

TEMPLETON

Perhaps. (*His talk takes a serious turn.*) Most girls are like so many blind fish tossed about helplessly on the sea of life; now this way, now that—simply the plaything of a heartless sea-monster. I pity them, and then again, I wonder sometimes if they themselves are not to blame. So few of them have an object in life higher than that of merely looking attractive. They thirst after pearls, diamonds, satins, laces, furs, in fact everything which serves to detract from the natural beauty which God has given them. Where is the woman soul? They let it sleep and languish undiscovered within them. Their one desire is wealth for the decoration of their bodies. They overlook every other quality in the man who possesses it. They are guided only by the glitter of his gold. It blinds their eyes to all his hidden vices, and they stumble helplessly into his arms having attained that honorable distinction—his only legitimate concubine.

JEANETTE

(*with horror*)

Oh! Have you no respect to say such a thing before me?

TEMPLETON

I have more than respect; I have compassion.

THE ICE LENS

Perhaps I have spoken too plainly, but I wanted you to understand me clearly. Girls blush and faint too easily; their ears are too delicate. But the time has arrived when they must listen to other than sugar-coated words. This modesty is too often mistaken for virtue. Virtue means courage—not timidity; and until girls know it as such, modern marriage will continue to be little more than a trap for innocent butterflies.

JEANETTE

I am glad now that you have told me; it has given me greater confidence than ever in Reginald. I only see now what an angel he is compared to other men. It would just have been my luck to catch one of these sea-serpents had I gone fishing for myself, but my dear good Dad has avoided that by making the selection for me.

TEMPLETON

It is beautiful that father and child should agree—if their common plan guarantees future happiness.

JEANETTE

You seem to doubt my father's judgment.

TEMPLETON

It is not impossible that fathers are sometimes wrong.

JEANETTE

My father! Never. I shall always do exactly as he wishes; I shall let him lead me everywhere.

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TEMPLETON

You should learn to rely a little more on yourself.

(He picks up the puff of hair again.)

When I drew this from your hair, I never once thought the inside of your head was likewise not your own. Come, sit down; let us talk it over. Let us see if you can reason.

(Jeanette, somewhat reluctantly, takes the large chair again.)

Now suppose your father has chosen wrongly; suppose the man selected for your future companion doesn't really care for you at heart; suppose he is dishonorable—too dishonorable to tell you openly that he is morally unclean, and that you would consequently suffer sorrow and pain. Then your father would have to shoulder all the blame, and you would have to admit that you yourself had done nothing to avoid your own grief as well as his, but that you had walked into it willingly, blindly. Why not use your own eyes a little? Think how beautiful it would be if you could show an erring father the truth; if you could change him into a righteous man.

JEANETTE

You have started me to thinking; that is something I have never done before.

TEMPLETON

We have made a discovery!

JEANETTE

The discovery that I am nothing more than a

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sickle goose without a mind of my own—a simpleton dancing to any tune which others chance to whistle.

TEMPLETON
(consolingly)

No.

JEANETTE
(emphatically)

Yes I am, and anyone who says I am anything better is only flattering me. It's true, it's true, and you are the first person who has ever shown me what a shallow thing I am. I spoke the truth after all when I told you I was perfectly silly. (*She sobs.*)

TEMPLETON

Oh! You aren't going to cry; are you?

JEANETTE

(lowering her head on the arm of the chair)

Yes; I shall feel the better for it.

TEMPLETON

Good! I shall give you a handkerchief.

(*He reaches into his coat pocket, and unconsciously pulls out the pink stocking. Jeanette, of course, does not see it, and he lowers it quickly into the wastebasket at the side of his desk. Then he walks to the chiffonier, opens a drawer, takes out a folded handkerchief, and hands it to her.*)

Here is a nice clean one. Sorry I have no perfume, but the blue border is an "awfully stunning match" to your dress.

JEANETTE

(*lifting her face and taking the handkerchief with a smile*)

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Thanks; I must have left mine in the car.

TEMPLETON

Your tears have washed all the powder off your nose, and I believe the freckle has gone with them.

JEANETTE

I shouldn't be surprised if it has, because I feel as though I have been changed all over.

TEMPLETON

That's splendid—have another drink of water.
(*He hands her the glass, and she takes a sip or two.*)
Drink more; wash away all that former frivolity.
(*She empties the glass.*) There! I knew all the while there was the making of a sensible girl within you.

JEANETTE

How did you know it?

TEMPLETON

Any girl who is brave enough to enter a dark building alone is brave enough to defy custom and submission by exercising good judgment and independence.

JEANETTE

Please tell me your ideal of a girl.

TEMPLETON

(*sitting down again at his desk*)

I once thought she was lost forever by the wayside, but I know she is still among us only we do not recognize her stifling under the dust and grim which arises from this futile combat for wealth, title, and notoriety. That girl shall never die; that

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girl who is herself as God made her; that girl who is more than a mere body; that girl who has a living and a loving soul; whose personality surpasses her beauty; whose culture outshines her fashion; who is sensible; self-reliant; wide-awake.

JEANETTE
(awakening)

Who are you? I have been here all this time, and have never once thought to ask.

TEMPLETON

I am the proctor here—John Templeton by name.

JEANETTE

And you stay all alone here in the dark?

TEMPLETON

Yes; alone.

JEANETTE

How did you happen to get here?

TEMPLETON

There is a Higher Power that sends men into the dark to help those who are stumbling there.

JEANETTE

A Higher Power?

TEMPLETON

Yes; I serve that Power by working for Light, Truth and Good.

JEANETTE

For Light?

TEMPLETON

By opening the eyes of the blind and the ignorant.

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JEANETTE

For Truth?

TEMPLETON

That they may see things as they are.

JEANETTE

For Good?

TEMPLETON

That they may be restored to honor and integrity.

JEANETTE

You must be happy with such a noble task.

TEMPLETON

I am; very happy.

JEANETTE

Nothing, I suppose, could make you happier?

TEMPLETON

Yes; could I find it.

JEANETTE

What is it?

TEMPLETON

Coöperation: someone who is not afraid to seek and learn the truth; someone who is brave enough to fight and conquer evil; someone to share my devotion to God's work for the righteousness and happiness of His people; someone who is nearer to them, perhaps, than I; someone to call them back to honor and manliness; and to tear asunder the web they are spinning about her.

(There is a marked silence during which both Jean-

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ette and Templeton are lost in mutual reflection. Then she rises suddenly from her chair, and holds out her hand.)

JEANETTE

Good night, Mr. Templeton.

TEMPLETON

(taking her hand firmly)

Good night; I shall go with you to the door.

JEANETTE

Please don't; I wish to go alone. I must go alone.

TEMPLETON

But the hallway is dark; I shall prepare the candle.

JEANETTE

It is not necessary. You have already given me "The Light."

(At this instant, one of the glowing logs in the grate in Adder's room falls apart, and bursts into flame, illuminating the walls with a bright flickering light. Jeanette leaves Templeton's room, softly closing the door. He walks toward the bed, removes the Ninety-first Psalm there, carries it forward to the light, sits in the large chair, and reads it in silence. Jeanette passes the door of Adder's room. Her eyes are immediately attracted by the reflection of the firelight from the silver picture frame on his desk. She walks in, lifts up the picture, returns it, sinks into the chair, sobs aloud, and buries her face in her arms on

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the top of the desk. Then she lifts her head, and dries her tears with the handkerchief—the blue-bordered one from Templeton; she holds it at arm's length, and then raises it to her lips. Walking to the fireplace, she removes the engagement ring—Lulu's, by the way—from her finger, and drops it among the embers. She gazes dreamily into the fire for a second or two, and then leaves the room quietly.)

TEMPLETON

(reading a part of the psalm aloud)
"Thou shalt tread upon the lion and adder."

ACT THREE

ACT THREE

(The fire.)

The scene is in the "Lyon's Den" a month or so later; it shows the large living-room at Ralph Lyon's home. A large archway in the rear opens into a conservatory with numerous palms. These palms encircle a fountain, which plays over a group of statues of nude women; a softened effect is given to the setting by means of a rosy light, the source of which is hidden under the water. On either side of this archway are larger statues of the same description, each supporting a cluster of electric lights. Above the arch, there is a long horizontal painting of the "Fatima" type in Adder's room. There is a smaller archway above the floor level in the left wall; two or three semi-circular steps lead up to it, and a pair of heavy portieres are drawn across it. On either side of this second arch, there are stationary bookcases extending half way up the wall; the tops of these are ornamented with smaller statues, and another art (?) picture hangs over each. In the right wall, there is a third arch opening into an entrance-hall from the street. On the side of it

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nearest the conservatory, stands a cellarette; on the other side, a small table, the under shelf of which holds a sewing basket. Fatima No. 4 hangs over the cellarette, and a large painting of Mona Lisa hangs over the table. A large davenport stands parallel to the left wall directly before the steps. A circular seat, with an electrolier running up through its center, stands to the right, placed symmetrically with respect to the entrance-hall arch. There are other pieces of appropriate furniture, including a reading chair placed in front of the nearest bookcase. The floors are covered with oriental rugs. There are small bracket-lights on either side of the right and left arches. The general atmosphere of the room reflects the depraved tastes of Ralph Lyon himself; the paintings and statuary stand out boldly against the dark walls and heavy tapes-tries. Everything is elaborate but not elegant.

Mrs. Lyon is seated on the davenport, wrapped up in a shawl and working over her embroidery. Ralph Lyon, in a smoking jacket, stands before the cellarette pouring out a glass of brandy.

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MRS. LYON

Dear me; I've sewed so much, I've got a stitch in my side.

(She rises, places her fancy work on the davenport, and crosses the room to thread her needle with a different shade of silk from the basket under the table. She glances up at the picture of Mona Lisa.)

I suppose one needs a college education, Ralph, before they can admire this new oil painting. I am afraid Jeanette will have the same trouble getting me to like it that she had cultivating my taste for olives.

LYON

(draining the glass)

It's a perfect freak of a picture, and it's as much out of place in this collection as a milkshake in a barroom.

(He returns the bottle and glass to the cellarette, and closes the door rather noisily.)

MRS. LYON

Jeanette raves about the expression of the face and the beautiful simplicity of the dress.

LYON

(taking up the book he has left open on the circular seat)

Bosh! If she had no dress on at all, there might be something worth while looking at.

(He sits down and commences to read.)

THE ICE LENS

MRS. LYON

(returning to the davenport)

Well, Ralph, while I do not take a great fancy to Jeanette's taste in paintings, I must say that I can't rave over yours. I love rural paintings; if I had my way, I would have the walls covered with cows instead of "bares."

LYON

If you had your way, we would all be living fifty miles out in the country on a farm, where there would be nothing to drink stronger than buttermilk.

MRS. LYON

I would be in heaven then, Ralph, and I know Jefferson would be in *his* glory.

LYON

Jefferson! If you would put him on a farm, he would be holding services in the barnyard trying to convert the pigs and geese.

MRS. LYON

Poor Jeff. My heart aches for him; he is always being nagged at.

LYON

Yes. He is the cause of all the nagging in this house; if it hadn't been for him, the chances are you and I would each have found a more congenial mate.

(There is a short silence in which Mrs. Lyon brushes aside a tear.)

THE ICE LENS

Oh! there's no use crying over it; what's done can't be undone. But Jefferson himself could do a lot more to make us all happier. If he would only forget this confounded missionary idea and be human like other boys. It will be a happy day for me when Jeanette is married to young Adder; I will at least have a son-in-law, if not a son, who will sit down and take a drink with me in the evenings.

MRS. LYON

I believe something cold has come between Jeanette and Reginald. She seems rather queer of late.

LYON

That's nothing; all girls get that way after they are engaged.

MRS. LYON

She has decided not to go to the Prom, and last year she was wild about it.

LYON

She will change her mind before long.

MRS. LYON

Many a girl would jump at the chance.

LYON

Just leave it to me—I will get her around to going.

MRS. LYON

Yes; you can do anything with her. She always was her father's girl. My ways have never suited her; they are too old-fashioned.

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LYON

I suppose she finds you rather unprogressive. You and Jefferson make a better pair.

MRS. LYON

I do the best I can, Ralph. I was brought up in more humble surroundings, and my education was none too good. My friends do not appeal to Jeanette. She prefers the company of yours on account of their wealth and social position. She always has been fond of display. Of course I cannot buy the pearls, the elegant furs and the valuable clothes which you shower upon her. All I can give her is a mother's love, and that, I assure you, will never grow cold whatever be her own feelings toward me.

LYON

Why—she is just in the prime of her life. You can't expect her to be cooped up in the house all the time with her arm around her mother's neck. Anyhow, isn't it enough that you should have Jefferson? Leave Jeanette's affection for me.

MRS. LYON

I would not for the world have it diminished in any way; it is all you have, Ralph, since my affection for you is not exactly welcome.

(Jeanette enters from behind the portieres, and descends the steps to the front bookcase. Her dress is simple and neat, and her hair is modestly arranged. It is, however, rather from the trend of her conversation that we perceive a decided turn

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in character. Her repartee, throughout the following scenes, is by no means restrained, and seems even rude at times. But we must not forget that, in the previous Act, she was openly made the target of much irritative—however helpful—criticism, and it is only natural that she, who heretofore has displayed little if any self-control, should attack revengefully those for whom she has unknowingly served as puppet. In fact, we see her in a transient state; Templeton's message has awakened in her a powerful sentiment, but her motives are as yet irrational.)

LYON

(being the first to observe her)

We have just been discussing you, Jeanette.

JEANETTE

I trust nothing but good things were said, Father.

MRS. LYON

It was about the Prom, Jeanette.

LYON

Mother said you were thinking about omitting it from your calender of festivities.

JEANETTE

Yes; I shall.

LYON

Why?

JEANETTE

Oh, I have outgrown dancing. I have decided

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it is all so very silly—one just goes round and round in circles and never gets anywhere. I am going to spend my winter evenings reading good literature.

(She glances over the books on the shelves.)

We used to have a copy of Emerson.

LYON

Emerson—Bosh!

(He holds up the book he has in his hand.)

Why don't you read some of those short French stories?

(He points to the further bookcase.)

There are one hundred volumes at your command, each and every one filled with spicy exciting tales.

JEANETTE

(still searching for her book)

It had a green binding. Do you happen to know where it is, Mother?

MRS. LYON

It is not on that shelf, dear; they are all my books on farming and cattle-raising. Very likely you will find it on the shelf below.

JEANETTE

(taking a book and opening it)

Yes; here it is. I have opened it to the very thing I wanted—an essay on Self Reliance.

LYON

(returning to the original conversation)

THE ICE LENS

But then, Jeanette, aside from the dancing, look at the many acquaintances you will miss—wealthy young men from all parts of the country.

JEANETTE

My coterie is quite extensive as it is, Father, as far as wealthy young men are concerned; I know enough of these handsome faces and fur-lined coats who are spending their fathers' incomes.

LYON

You have found them entertaining; haven't you?

JEANETTE

(slowly turning over the pages of her book)

Yes. They know how to be deliciously sociable; they can play both bridge and golf; they can dance like fairies; they are very gallant and remarkably well versed in the art of flattery and—well, that's about all.

(She sits down in the reading chair.)

LYON

You admire such accomplishments; don't you?

JEANETTE

Yes; if there is something really worth while to go with them—but all garnish and no meat makes Jack a deceit.

LYON

Well, what more do you want them to have?

JEANETTE

Ambition; at least one grain of it. They don't

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even know they have such a thing as a brain.

LYON

They are attending college; aren't they?

JEANETTE

Yes; I went through that refining process.

LYON

And look what it has made of you.

JEANETTE

Yes; look. A perfect lady who can ride horseback and say "*Parlez vous Français?*" but who hasn't enough common-sense to thread a needle. What a fine thing it would be if Miss Martinot would abolish her course in æsthetic dancing, and teach the girls how to bake a cake.

LYON

(teasing her)

Why you are a splendid little cook, Jeanette; I shall never forget that *marble* cake you baked last summer.

MRS. LYON

(who has been enjoying the conversation in silence)

Don't discourage the poor girl by bringing that up again.

LYON

Bringing it up! I never got mine down.

JEANETTE

And it is just the same with the young man who attends college: he can't apply what he has learned

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to making dough either, and consequently he must live on his father's roll.

LYON

Men don't go to college to learn how to make money; they go to learn how to spend it. The college education is intended for gentlemen only.

JEANETTE

Yes. In Freshman year they study Geometry, and learn the proper length for trousers and the correct angle for the hat; in Sophomore year they study Chemistry, and learn how to generate hot air; in Junior year they study History, and learn the laws of chivalry and the art of keeping dates; in Senior year they study Botany, and learn how to grow a mustache. Educated—Q. E. D.

MRS. LYON

What does that mean, Jeanette? That Q. E. D.?

JEANETTE

Queasy Effeminate Dudes. That is the type of young man Father wants me to meet. Well, I have had enough of them, and from now on, I want associates who are really of some use in this world—people who are doing it some good—people with the higher and nobler thought.

LYON

You don't mean poets and preachers; do you? Good Lord, don't encourage their calling at the house

THE ICE LENS

—one is enough in the family. Let us have more *real* men like Mr. Adder; he is my ideal.

JEANETTE

He was mine also at one time, but fortunately I have changed my mind before it was too late.

(Lyon *drops his book, and Mrs. Lyon stops sewing, but Jeanette starts to read her Emerson without noticing the astonishment caused by her remark.*)

LYON

Why, Jeanette, what do you mean?

JEANETTE

I mean that I no longer desire his company.

LYON

There must be a reason.

JEANETTE

(*closing her book emphatically*)

There is: Mr. Adder is only the husband *you* have selected for me; he is not the man of *my* choice.

LYON

(*rising*)

What difference does that make? Doesn't he come from an aristocratic family? Isn't he wealthy? Isn't he a fine fellow in every way?

JEANETTE

You may think so, but not I.

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LYON

(angrily)

It matters little what you think; in fact, you don't know how to think, and that is why I had to find a husband for you. You will marry Mr. Adder, or not marry at all.

JEANETTE

(rising quickly)

That is a question which *I* shall decide. In one thing, at least, a girl should have her own way, and that is in choosing the man with whom she must live, side by side, for the rest of her lifetime—the man on whom all her future happiness depends. I cannot sacrifice that happiness just to please you; the only way I *can* please you and make you happy is to acquire happiness first for myself. Your choice would bring me nothing but grief. Later you will justify me for having returned Mr. Adder's engagement ring.

LYON

(stunned)

What! You have returned his ring?

JEANETTE

Yes.

LYON

(unable to restrain himself)

You young idiot! Have you lost your head?

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JEANETTE

(calmly)

No; I have acquired one.

(Jeanette walks up the steps reading her essay. Her parents stare at her in silence and astonishment. Then, Mrs. Lyon, smiling in admiration, resumes her sewing, while the father, white with rage, paces up and down the floor.)

MRS. LYON

I wonder what has come over the child.

LYON

The devil has gotten into her; she's bewitched.

MRS. LYON

There's something at the bottom of it—

LYON

And I'll thrash it out. There must be a very good reason made clear to me before I let this state of affairs continue. We can't let such a fine chap escape from the family. I shall have him come to the house to-night, and we will learn the whole situation. (*He reflects for a few moments.*) I've got it: I'll 'phone to him and ask him over for a few rubbers of bridge.

(*He ascends the steps, and leaves the room. Morris appears at the entrance-hall arch.*)

MORRIS

Mrs. Dearborn Hunter.

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MRS. LYON

(rising, removing her shawl, folding it, and hanging it across the back of the davenport)

I guess it's too early to say I have retired, so I shall have to endure her. Let it in, Morris.

(Morris leaves, and we immediately hear Mrs. Hunter's tongue before she makes her appearance. She enters, and throws her cape on the circular seat, displaying a very showy evening gown, cut extremely low in the front and even more so in the back. Her coiffure is most outlandish, her arms and fingers are groaning with jewelry, and her face is besmeared with powder and paint.)

MRS. HUNTER

Good evening, Dearie. How fortunate to find you home; I invited myself over to spend the whole evening—I knew you would be delighted.

(She greets Mrs. Lyon with a kiss, and stands, facing the conservatory, so that we cannot fail to observe her posterior exposure.)

It's a very cold night; isn't it? My back is almost frozen in spite of the fact that I am wearing my heaviest underwear. You don't mind my taking a little brandy; do you?

MRS. LYON

(returning to the davenport)

Not at all. Perhaps you would like a shawl also?

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MRS. HUNTER

(opening the cellarette)

No; thank you, Dearie. I'll be warmed up directly.

(She pours out a glass of liquor.)

Won't you join me?

MRS. LYON

No, indeed; Ralph does the drinking for the whole house.

MRS. HUNTER

What a lucky man; how I envy him.

(She drinks, and then reads the label on the bottle.)

Hennessy—Three Star. My, but that is elegant.

(She quickly takes a second glass, and then returns the bottle to the cellarette.)

Mr. Hunter buys me such cheap truck; it tastes like dish water, and he limits me to three bottles a week—but I manage to have a few extras smuggled in. This Hennessy makes me feel like a girl in her teens.

(She lifts up her skirt, displaying a pair of brilliant lavender stockings, and, humming a sensual waltz, she dances frivolously about the room, stopping before the portrait of Mona Lisa.)

Oh! you've got a new picture—Rembrandt's *Mona Lisa*—the most remarkable *Selbsbildniss* ever painted.

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MRS. LYON

(taking up her fancy work again)

I must try and remember that—it will please Jeanette to hear me say it.

MRS. HUNTER

(examining the painting more closely with her lorgnette.)

I saw the original in Rome last summer. It hangs beside Paul Potter's *Bull* in St. Paul's Cathedral.

MRS. LYON

It it were only a bull's picture instead! Jeanette thinks it is wonderful, but I cannot make myself like it.

MRS. HUNTER

(walking over to the davenport, and sitting down beside Mrs. Lyon)

How pitiful! You should really do more to cultivate your taste in art, Dearie. Have you subscribed for the opera?

MRS. LYON

No; only for *Country Life* and *Collier's*.

MRS. HUNTER

I was referring to the opera season, Dearie. Mr. DePyster took me the other night. Mary Garden appeared in *The Countess of Hoffmann*: her voice was truly remarkable, and her acting was perfect, but her *coloratura*—oh! it didn't fit well at all. To-

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morrow night we are going to hear *Thaïs* with Slezak in the title role—they say her voice is so womanly and tender. I suppose you would be bored by it all, Dearie?

MRS. LYON

I would far rather hear a cow bawl—there's more tune to it.

MRS. HUNTER

If I could only persuade you to forget that dairy farm. Really, Dearie, you should strive to admire the anaesthetic—but you are exactly like Mr. Hunter. He prefers the lighter operas like *Salome*, and the more frivolous performers like Bernhardt and Fritzi Scheff. I simply can't stand them; Bernhardt is so fleshy, and Fritzi—oh! I think it's frightful how low she wears her gowns. The truth about Mr. Hunter is: he doesn't know what he wants. He's getting to be such a terrible bore. He's asleep half the time; our evenings are so dull, and if I try to amuse him with my conversation he takes up his hat and coat, and goes to the club. It is really the best thing for the poor fellow to do. It is only right that we should live as individuals; what's pleasure for wife cannot always be pleasure for husband. Anyhow, happy marriages are quite out of fashion, and if one is out of fashion one might just as well be dead.

(Jeanette walks down the steps, and stands behind the davenport unnoticed. She still has her book

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under her arm. Mrs. Lyon continues to sew, and Mrs. Hunter continues to talk.)

I have found a most entertaining companion in Mr. Chauncey Everit DePyster; he's such a jolly fellow—so brilliant and so witty. When Mr. Hunter goes to the club I just 'phone to Chauncey. He has never once refused an invitation. He is Mr. Adder's roommate; you know. I often tell him to bring *that* young gentleman along, but he seems to have other interests.

(She places her head a little nearer to Mrs. Lyon's, and lowers the tone of her voice.)

I really shouldn't repeat it, but Chauncey tells me Adder has a terrible crush on a certain chorus girl he calls Lulu.

(Mrs. Lyon stops sewing. Her face takes on a look of surprise, but Jeanette taps her lightly on the shoulder, and she resumes her sewing, listening more attentively to the remarks of her visitor but showing the same outward disinterest as heretofore.)

He follows her all around the neighboring towns on one-night stands, and each time brings back a pair of her stockings to decorate his room at the dormitory.

(She slaps Mrs. Lyon on the thigh, and laughs coarsely.)

It's too bad he must associate with such vulgar

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material, but, after hard study all day long, I suppose the young men need something to refresh them, and for that reason I do all that is in my power for Chauncey.

(Jeanette steps forward from her place of vantage.)

Ah! good evening, Miss Jeanette. What makes you look so queer, child? Oh! it's your hair. I don't like it at all—so painfully simple.

MRS. LYON

But very natural.

MRS. HUNTER

And yet so unbecoming. Chauncey admired mine so warmly last night.

JEANETTE

Of course. Men are all that way. They admire anything extreme; they would twist their heads off their shoulders to gloat after a hobble skirt, and that is just the reason so many girls wear them. They are just as bad as the men; they will wear anything to attract attention.

MRS. HUNTER

Don't forget that your own creations this fall were the talk of the town; even dotty Mr. Hunter—to say nothing of the younger set—used to remark over the opportunity they gave you to display your stunning figure.

JEANETTE

Yes, but I have made a resolution to masquerade

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no more. I shall dress modestly and simply, and if men are going to admire me, it must be for what there is in me, and not for my mere externalities.

MRS. HUNTER

(to Mrs. Lyon)

What a change has come over your daughter, Dearie!

MRS. LYON

A change which I very much admire.

MRS. HUNTER

Where did you get your ideas, Jeanette?

JEANETTE

From yonder picture—Mona Lisa. She is divinely beautiful: her graceful hands are unmarred by rings; her hair could have no gentler an arrangement, and her dress is simplicity itself.

MRS. HUNTER

Then what is it that makes her beautiful?

JEANETTE

Her personality—her inner self—her soul.

MRS. HUNTER

How can an artist paint what he cannot see? Her *inner* self?

JEANETTE

Leonardo did not paint what he saw. He produced in form and color the influence which her spiritual person had upon him. Each quality, good or bad, that dwells within us can be expressed in the

THE ICE LENS

human face. The character of Mona Lisa is portrayed in her countenance, and there one reads the sweetness and the purity of her soul.

MRS. HUNTER

But the whole make-up is ridiculously plain.

JEANETTE

Only those of us who have hard faces must put them in the shadow of an absurd overhanging hair-dress, and cover over with paint and cosmetics the lines which sin and abuse have stamped upon them.

MRS. HUNTER

You had better beware, Dearie, lest Jeanette end her days in a convent.

JEANETTE

I am not joking, Mrs. Hunter; I am serious.

MRS. HUNTER

I should say you are: If you are not careful, you will be consumed by your own ideals.

JEANETTE

(sitting in the reading chair, and opening her book)

A condition to which some of us have already been reduced.

(Mrs. Hunter conceals a slight embarrassment under a forced laugh. Morris again appears at the entrance-hall arch.)

MORRIS

Mr. Adder and Mr. DePyster.

(He leaves, and the two men enter.)

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MRS. HUNTER

(rushing to meet DePyster)

Ah! my dear Mr. DePyster, what a pleasure for you to find me here! *(She takes his hand, and they engage in conversation unnoticed by the others.)*

ADDER

(offering his hand)

Good evening, Mrs. Lyon.

MRS. LYON

(rising, taking it somewhat coolly, and sitting down again)

Good evening.

ADDER

(extending his hand to Jeannette)

Good evening, Jeanette.

JEANNETTE

(rising, and returning her book to the shelf)

Good evening, Mr. Adder. It is a very cold night; isn't it?

ADDER

(dropping his hand)

Rather.

(Jeanette walks away toward the davenport, and, standing behind it, she stoops over and places her arms lovingly about her mother's neck. Neither of them speak, but during their silence, in which they seem unconscious of the presence and actions of the others, a feeling of tender affection and mutual concord passes between them.)

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Adder removes the same book which Jeanette returned to the shelf.)

ADDER

(turning over the pages)

Wealth . . Character . . Behavior . . Compensation.

(He closes the book, and returns it.)

Compensation?

(Ralph Lyon appears at the head of the steps unfolding a card table.)

LYON

Good evening, everybody.

MRS. HUNTER

(leaving DePyster and crossing the room to take Lyon's hand)

Why, good evening, Ralphie.

LYON

(patting her boldly on the back with his left hand)

You're looking finer than ever, Lottie. Just in time for our bridge party; you may play Mrs. Lyon's hand—she makes such a dry partner anyway.

MRS. HUNTER

(reaching up to straighten his necktie)

Sorry, but I really must go. I hadn't intended staying long. There is no one at home; Mr. Hunter has gone to the club.

LYON

(taking her arm)

I shall walk over with you.

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MRS. HUNTER

(chucking him under the chin)

Not to-night, Ralphie; I have already granted the permission to Mr. DePyster.

(Mrs. Hunter turns to look in the direction of DePyster, who has been standing statuelike on the same spot since his entrance. He meets her glance with a ceremonious bow. Mrs. Hunter exchanges a few confidential words with Lyon, while Adder, who has been glancing over the names of books on the shelves, crosses over to meet DePyster on mention of his name.)

ADDER

(aside)

I brought you along to defend me; didn't I? You must stay, Chaunce.

DEPYSTER

But, Addy dear, I must be courteous to the ladies; Mrs. Hunter has first claim to me.

MRS. HUNTER

Good night, Ralphie. Good night, Mr. Adder. Good night, Dearie. *(then sarcastically to Jeanette)* Good night, Sister Beatrice.

(DePyster throws the cape over Mrs. Hunter's shoulders, and they glide out through the entrance hall.)

LYON

Well, there are still enough of us left for an interesting game.

THE ICE LENS

(He places the card table.)

Mrs. Lyon and I will play you and Jeanette, Reginald—if that is agreeable to all.

ADDER

I am well pleased with the arrangement.

LYON

And you, Jeanette?

JEANETTE

(removing her arms from her mother's neck)

Absolutely indifferent, Father.

LYON

And, of course, Mother is always satisfied with everything.

MRS. LYON

But in the game we play to-night, she prefers to be on her daughter's side.

LYON

(shuffling the cards)

Very well, we shall decide it by cut.

MRS. LYON

The cut has already been made.

LYON

What do you mean, Mother?

MRS. LYON

I see no reason why we should lead up to it gradually. What we wish to decide is whether or not Mr. Adder is a fit companion for our daughter.

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LYON

(dropping the cards)

You are too previous.

ADDER

I came here with the intention of playing bridge. Mr. Lyon 'phoned to me that Jeanette, in particular, extended a cordial invitation. If you find yourselves indisposed to do so, I shall gladly leave, and pardon your error.

LYON

I am sorry, Mr. Adder, that this question should come up so soon.

ADDER

Soon! I infer then that the object of this deal after all has been to trap me.

JEANETTE

I wish you to understand, Mr. Adder, that this bridge party is no affair of mine. I was entirely ignorant of your coming.

MRS. LYON

No; Jeanette has not planned it. It is simply a scheme of Mr. Lyon's to get you here.

JEANETTE

I would hardly consider it an open one. I believe in informing both my guests and my family as to the nature of my entertainment so they may come prepared. I assure you, Mr. Adder, that I have

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also been trapped, but I am not afraid to fight for my liberty.

LYON

Come, come, don't make it all so important.

(He taps Adder on the shoulder.)

What we wish, my good friend, is simply an understanding about the relation between you and our daughter.

ADDER

That is a matter which she alone can explain. All I can say is that I love her loyally, and am entirely unable to fathom her recent feeling toward me.

JEANETTE

Pardon my interruption, Sir, but I must contradict your statement, for you are *not* loyal, and your most ardent declaration will fail to make me think otherwise.

ADDER

Then what would you have me do to prove my sincerity?

JEANETTE

Nothing; do not ponder on what you should do, but recall what you have done.

ADDER

I still plead ignorance.

JEANETTE

I will not believe you. I cannot see why my insinuations should amuse you this way. I only

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regret that our friendship has lasted this long, and that it has been founded on false devotion.

ADDER

I do wish you would make things clearer, Jeanette.

JEANETTE

I have been your plaything long enough; please do not torment me further. If you have any respect for me and my parents, you will favor us with an open confession.

LYON

Jeanette is probably making a lot over nothing. What's the matter, Adder? Have you been looking at the moon with another girl?

JEANETTE

I am not so narrow-minded as you seem to infer, Father; my plea is not jealousy. I would not have denied Mr. Adder the pleasure of other girls' company unless that pleasure became indecent.

ADDER

What in the world are you leading up to? Is this idle fancy, or have your ears fallen prey to gossip? But go on; continue the bridge party, and make your grand slam.

JEANETTE

Admit it yourself; I shall say no more.

ADDER

You needn't; I see through it all: your brother—

THE ICE LENS

Jefferson—has played me false after he swore to keep his promise.

LYON

Quite likely; he brings more trouble and discontent than a nest of yellow jackets.

JEANETTE

My brother has told me nothing.

ADDER

(facing Mrs. Lyon)

Then he has told your mother.

MRS. LYON

My son has said nothing, but I can well understand my daughter's attitude by what I have heard from another source.

ADDER

From whom?

MRS. LYON

From Mrs. Dearborn Hunter—the village gossip. Believe me, if *her* ears are open, it doesn't take long for her mouth to follow suit.

ADDER

And where did she hear it?

MRS. LYON

From your closest friend—your roommate—Mr. DePyster.

ADDER

Then both of them had good reason to leave, but

THE ICE LENS

they would do well to better their own morals before advertising mine.

LYON

Well, I haven't heard yet what it's all about. What are we wrangling over anyhow?

ADDER

Simply this, Mr. Lyon: I took supper once or twice with a chorus girl.

LYON

(laughing aloud)

You women paint everything as big as a house. Why there is nothing wrong with Mr. Adder's behavior; the month before I was married was the gayest time of my life—to say nothing of the frolics, unknown to mother, which followed the nuptial ceremony.

MRS. LYON

Ralph, it is nothing to boast of before Jeanette.

JEANETTE

(sinking down on the davenport)

I am sorry, so sorry, to learn of it.

ADDER

Don't judge me, Jeanette, before you know a little more about your own father. Not long ago, when DePyster called on Mrs. Hunter, he told me he interrupted something more than a dinner party between her and *(He pokes Lyon gently in the ribs.)* this old boy. . .

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JEANETTE

(hiding her face in her arm on the back of the davenport)

Oh!

LYON

(tickling Adder in the side)

Yes; great joke, wasn't it?

MRS. LYON

Lest both of you have forgotten, I should like to remind you of the fact that you are standing before women.

LYON

Bosh! We will never make any headway unless we speak plainly; we will have to forget our modesty for a while, and discuss these affairs to see if they are so damned—

MRS. LYON

(quickly)

Ralph! My ears have often been pained by your language on occasions when I could excuse you; a man is not responsible for what he says when he is under the influence of drink, but I always thought my husband was a gentleman—at least when sober.

LYON

(hotly)

Don't dictate to me. I am the boss in this house, and I know my business. Jeanette has got to learn

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plainly that men are all alike—they must have their little frolics on the side.

ADDER

Even Templeton, who is on duty to keep his eye on us at the dormitory, is not the angel we thought he was. On Halloween, when our fraternity was in session, and the whole house in total darkness, a girl was observed to slip in from the street, and the next morning the janitor found a puff of her hair on Templeton's desk and one of her stockings in his wastebasket.

(Jeanette's head slips from her arm, and she collapses on the davenport, unobserved by the others.)

LYON

Ha, ha, ha—and that's the goody-goody who sleeps with the 91st Psalm over his head! One of these people with the higher and nobler thought—as Jeanette puts it. *(He turns about and faces her.)* You see, Daughter, you are going to have a hard time finding these good, pure people you are preaching about. Don't you think you had better call off the quarrel, and shake hands with Reginald? Give him a nice kiss, and make everything right again.

ADDER

Yes, Jeanette.

(Adder puts his arm about her waist. His touch has the effect of a restorative: she immediately

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regains her strength and courage, rises, and frees herself of his embrace.)

JEANETTE

Don't touch me. I can never like you or come near you again, and even if I could, I would have no place in your heart when you remove my picture from the very frame in which I gave it to you, and replace it with an obscene portrait of your shameless mistress.

ADDER

Has Mrs. Hunter told you that also?

JEANETTE

No; I have seen it with my own eyes.

ADDER

When? Not the night of the reception?

JEANETTE

(openly)

No; it was the following night—Halloween.

ADDER

(triumphantly)

Oh! ho! Then it was you—our little Virgin Mary—who made the night call on Templeton.

LYON

Jeanette!

MRS. LYON

(taking her hand)

No.

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ADDER

(scornfully to Jeanette)

You clever little hypocrite. You charming little hussy.

(then to all)

I suppose this gilt-edge Lyon family thought they were playing a pretty trick when they invited me to their bridge party to-night, but they have discovered that their guest is not so green as they had expected. Now, that he has exposed his hand, the family can decide the game among themselves, while the dummy withdraws wishing a merry good evening to the whole pack.

(Adder struts from the room, and a few seconds later the door of the entrance-hall closes with a violent slam. Ralph Lyon stands spell-bound, staring at Jeanette, who remains speechless but firm.)

LYON

(after a short but awful silence)

Well, Miss Jeanette, have you nothing to say?

MRS. LYON

Speak, Jeanette; speak. Your mother will believe every word you say. Come; answer your father.

JEANETTE

(with emotion)

My father? My father? You call yourself my father; do you? You—you who stand there, and let

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these words pass the lips of such a cad; you—you who allow your daughter to be vilely insulted and dragged to this level of shame and indecency—you—you—and you make not even an attempt to strike down the heartless liar—you—you call yourself *my* father.

LYON

(unmoved)

I have listened to your side of the story; I must also listen to his. Your behavior of late, Jeanette, leads me to believe you are involved in a matter which weighs heavily on your mind. Your mother, too, has noticed it. Perhaps Mr. Adder has opened our eyes, and it remains for you to change the light in which I fear I already hold you.

JEANETTE

You mean you are not only going to submit to hearing him, but you are even going to believe him?

LYON

And why shouldn't I?

JEANETTE

Because your appetites run wanton, because you indulge in shameless pleasures, then you are going to place me in the same light just because I am your child?

LYON

Until you vindicate yourself in some way or other, I shall consider you a disgrace to the family.

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JEANETTE

I—a disgrace to the family? I? And what have *you* done, and what are you doing to honor it? Your own tongue blabs your disgraceful behavior, and only now I see that your face also portrays it. Your tastes confirm it. And yet, dissatisfied with the atmosphere in which you have already enveloped our home by lavishing your father's money on articles that reek with lust, you scheme, through me as a medium, to bring into our midst a son-in-law whose deeds are as (*She pauses a second or two, and then adds explosively:*) filthy as your own.

LYON

Silence! Don't repeat to me again the faults which every man enjoys. The world knows all that, and still treats him with respect.

JEANETTE

Yes; men can be lifted from a public street, where they lie exhausted and stupefied from over-indulgence, and the next day, even those who have seen them there, are ready to forgive and forget. But let a single irresponsible person gossip falsely about a girl or a woman, and the whole world stands up and bellows her disgrace.

LYON

If Adder's report is false, it remains for you to prove it so, and I shall give you a fair chance. You must answer all my questions with no help or

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sympathy from your mother. I shall ask *her* to leave the room.

MRS. LYON

No; I *must* stay with Jeanette.

LYON

(*sternly*)

Leave the room. I command you.

(Mrs. Lyon *loses her courage, and leaves the room weeping*. Lyon begins an examination in which Jeanette's entire narrative is heartlessly misinterpreted to accord with the verdict which her father has already drawn up in his own depraved mind.)

LYON

Now, on Halloween, mother was out of town, and I went over to Hunter's to play bridge, leaving you here alone. Why did you leave the house?

JEANETTE

I received a message on the 'phone.

LYON

From whom?

JEANETTE

From Jefferson.

LYON

Your brother? Where was he?

JEANETTE

At the dormitory—at least I think so.

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LYON

What was the message?

JEANETTE

He called for help, saying he had been drugged in Mr. Adder's room.

LYON

Most women are clever liars, but those of your invention drop from an inexperienced tongue. Do you expect your father to believe that?

JEANETTE

I could scarcely believe it myself; it did not even sound like Jefferson's voice.

LYON

Have you seen him since?

JEANETTE

No, and I think it is queer, too, that he hasn't been home to mention it.

LYON

Not queer at all; the chances are, Jeff knows nothing about it. Your story is hard to believe, but go on. What did you do?

JEANETTE

The chauffeur wasn't here, so I cranked the engine myself, and ran the car madly up to the dormitory.

LYON

Yes; you have better control of the wheels that are *outside* of your head. Continue.

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JEANETTE

The building was in complete darkness, but the front door was open, unlocked. I stumbled through the dark hall until I came to a door with a light in it.

LYON

Who was there?

JEANETTE

It was Mr. Templeton's room. I told him about the message, and we searched Mr. Adder's room together, but found no sign of Jefferson.

LYON

Of course not. And what had Templeton to say?

JEANETTE

He said it was probably a Halloween joke.

LYON

Yes; he is a little more clever than you are. Are you quite sure, my young lady, that the strange voice over the 'phone was not—Templeton's?

JEANETTE

Absurd. Why would he do such a thing?

LYON

He very likely saw you the night before at the reception, took a liking to you—just as everybody does—and thought this was a splendid chance to get more intimately acquainted.

JEANETTE

How can you conceive the like?

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LYON

(in bold conceit)

I? Ha, I have devised schemes by far more clever when I myself had the same *hunch* in mind. Well, then what happened?

JEANETTE

We returned to Mr. Templeton's room.

LYON

Why didn't you come home immediately?

JEANETTE

I was too nervous to run the car. He asked me to sit down and rest.

LYON

How long did you stay?

JEANETTE

I have no idea; our talk grew so interesting.

LYON

Interesting, eh?

JEANETTE

Yes; he told me plainly what other men have never dared to breathe before me.

LYON

I can imagine.

JEANETTE

At times I thought he was bold to do so, but I soon realized that his every word was truth, and I desired to hear more and more.

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LYON

Yes; such things are always exciting to the innocent.

JEANETTE

I felt a queer emotion coming over me as though I were being born into a new life; his revelation made me the happiest girl alive. I was so happy, I cried—I couldn't help but love him for it.

LYON

You love *him*?

JEANETTE

(seriously)

Yes; from that moment, my heart and soul were his.

(Jeanette's night visit, in the sense her father sees it, appears after all, to a man of his conduct, as an act of common—although concealed—occurrence calling for little, if any, serious disapproval. Up to this point, the interview has furnished him considerable amusement, as indicated by his sportive manner. But when Jeanette confesses in all seriousness a real and profound love for the man he despises, then her father's former composure gives way to an animal fury.)

LYON

This common pauper who hasn't a cent of inheritance to his name, or a drop of respectable blood in his veins! This lunatic who has crossed my path once before by inveigling Jefferson into the mission,

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and now shatters my control over you by turning
your hollow head with his damnable nonsense!

JEANETTE

It matters little to me what you care to call him.
I shall love him in spite of all you say or think.

LYON

I understand now why you have discarded Mr. Adder: Not on account of his relation to other women, but because he was not more familiar with you. You were too ignorant to recognize his great respect for you, but when this hypocrite of a preacher lured you into his chamber, and initiated you into the very thing from which Adder was trying to shield your purity—you thought *that* was love.

JEANETTE

(gasping)

You misunderstand me; you are misunderstanding everything. I love this man because he has led me from blind existence into real happiness.

LYON

Ha, I know this real happiness with false hair flying about the room.

JEANETTE

He but playfully removed the puff from my hair.

LYON

(creeping close to her like a beast upon its prey, as if trying to hypnotize her into admitting what

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he believes passed between them)
That is: He took down your hair?

JEANETTE

(gradually becoming hysterical)
Don't say that; don't, I say.

LYON

The stocking was next in order.

JEANETTE

(grasping the arm of the davenport)
How can you? How can you?

LYON

And then—

JEANETTE

Stop; for God's sake, stop.

LYON

(without mercy)

The irresistible passed between you.

(Jeanette sways and then falls upon the davenport, her body shaking convulsively with her loud sobbing.)

LYON

(with triumph)

Ah, you fall before me, and hide your face. By this action, you confess your guilt; am I right?

(There is no answer, only sobs.)

Answer me.

(He seizes her roughly by the arm.)

Are you this man's mistress? Yes or no?

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JEANETTE

(rising defiantly before him)

To such a question I shall never answer. If my father's mind is so polluted that he cannot decide for himself as to the decency of his own daughter, then he may live in doubt forever.

LYON

Jeanette, until you are ready to confess to me, I do not care to see your lying face; I do not care to hear your lying voice. I disown you.

(He points to the street.)

There's the door. Go.

(He ascends the steps, turns the electric-light key at the door, and disappears behind the portieres. The room is filled with a flood of silver moonlight pouring in through the conservatory and the entrance-hall. Jeanette stands motionless until she hears her father close his bedroom door angrily. Then she walks to the foot of the steps, and faces the dark archway.)

JEANETTE

I despise you. I loathe you. I do not care to be the daughter of so blind and so vile a man, nor shall you claim me as such until you open your eyes to the truth, and proclaim my innocence with your own lips. I shall not live under your roof. I shall not come near you. When you are fit to see me, you must seek me, and for you I shall wait. I shall wait

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long perhaps, but not in vain. You must come. You *will* come.

(She takes her mother's shawl from the davenport, and throws it over her shoulders. She crosses the floor, and pauses for a few moments in the doorway of the entrance-hall where, for an instant, we see the moonlight playing on her beautiful and innocent face. Then she disappears under the cover of night.)

There is a long and restful silence like the calm after a storm. Then comes a loud crash of breaking glass in the conservatory. A man, half staggering and half crawling, feels his way through the palms into the living-room. He falls against one of the large statues, sending it to the floor in pieces. He himself lies there exhausted.

The noise brings Lyon from his room. He appears between the portieres with a revolver. He fires at the crouching form in the moonlight. His aim proves good, and the victim wails, "They have shot me. They have shot me.")

LYON

My God! is it you, Jefferson?

JEFFERSON

Yes; it's Jefferson.

LYON

(helping him over to the davenport)
And I have shot you?

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JEFFERSON

No; you didn't do it, Dad. You didn't do it. *They* did it.

LYON

Who?

JEFFERSON

The mocking fiends—there they are—see them—there—all standing in a row—pointing at me—laughing at me—look at their grinning faces. But they've got me now—they've got me now—they chased me everywhere—when I ran home, they followed me—I thought I was safe, but they shot me after I got in—*they* did it—I know they did—you didn't do it, Dad—they did it. (*He grasps his father's hand.*) You're all right, Dad—you're all right—it's the fiends that do all the evil.

LYON

The boy is mad.

(Mrs. Lyon *enters greatly excited.*)

MRS. LYON

What is wrong, Ralph? What is wrong?

LYON

Go to Jeanette's room, and tell her to come down at once. Telephone for the doctor immediately.

(*She leaves.*)

JEFFERSON

Was that mother?

LYON

Yes.

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JEFFERSON

(serenely)

Mother is an angel, Dad. Dear darling Mother—and now they have shot me, and I can't go with her on the farm—on dear Mother's farm—the fiends couldn't have followed me there; could they, Dad?

LYON

How long have you been this way, Jeff?

JEFFERSON

They forced me to drink brandy—the fiends—that was the beginning—I thought they were drugging me, and I called for help over the telephone—I called for Jeanette.

LYON

My God! The girl is innocent!

JEFFERSON

That was a long time ago—that was the start, Dad, and I couldn't get enough—couldn't get enough—it was drink, drink, drink—I was ashamed to come home—ashamed—ashamed.

MRS. LYON

(entering)

It is Jefferson I hear.

LYON

Yes; it is Jefferson, and he is dying from drink.

MRS. LYON

Dying?

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LYON

Yes; don't turn on the lights—I cannot bear to look him in the face.

JEFFERSON

Let me see Mother; let me hold her hand.

MRS. LYON

(on her knees before the davenport)

Poor Jefferson—my boy.

JEFFERSON

Away, you filthy woman. You and your kind are the cause of all this.

LYON

Oh! God!

JEFFERSON

It was for you they tried to make me lie to Jeanette—you are Adder's mistress. Away, vulgar prostitute!

MRS. LYON

Jefferson! Jefferson!

LYON

He has lost his mind. *(He wrings his hands.)* Where is Jeanette? Why doesn't she come?

MRS. LYON

Her room is dark and vacant. I could find her nowhere.

LYON

You mean she has left the house? Oh God! What have I done? Lost both my children—I have

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driven out my daughter, and have shot my own son.

(He walks to the conservatory and back.)

MRS. LYON

Ralph! *You shot him?*

LYON

I mistook him for a burglar, and I fired.

MRS. LYON

Oh, Jefferson, my poor boy!

LYON

(standing behind the davenport)

Slain by his father's hand.

(He covers his face, and moans.)

JEFFERSON

(trying to rise)

No, no, I tell you you're all right, Dad. *They* did it—the grinning apes—why don't you chase them out—they are making fun of me, and laughing at my pain *(He groans aloud.)*—don't let them see me die—put them out, Dad—for God's sake, put them out—they have always been in the house—they were after you, Dad, but they shot me instead—I am dying for you, Dad—thank God, I have saved you—I have saved you.

(After a few moments of intense agony, Jefferson passes away in his mother's arms. Lyon, as if transformed to stone, stands in silence behind the davenport gazing off into empty space. A dim light steals across his face causing it to

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stand out in contrast with the surrounding darkness. Nothing is heard except the deep sobs of the mother, who rests her head upon the lifeless body of her son. After a while, she slowly lifts her face toward her husband.)

MRS. LYON

He is dead, Ralph,—our little missionary.

LYON

(clasping her hand over the body of their dead son)

Yes, Martha; dead, but he has performed the mission assigned him by God—he has converted his father's soul.

(The light on Ralph Lyon's face grows gradually brighter. His countenance, once symbolic of evil and defilement, is now radiant with Truth.)

ACT FOUR

ACT FOUR

(The lens unmelted.)

The scene shows a corner and two walls of a room in a small cottage up in the mountains. The most noticeable feature of the room is an extraordinarily large window in the right and longer wall—so large in fact that we imagine the entire wall has been cut away to give the inmates a complete panoramic view of the surrounding country, which is temporarily hidden by the heavy fog preceding the dawn of an early Spring morning. The window is open, and the low sill is covered with potted plants bearing numerous colored blossoms. Below the sill there is a long window-seat with bright pillows; to the left are shelves filled with books. These shelves extend to the corner and beyond to a door in the left and shorter wall; a few busts and some stone jars filled with wild flowers adorn the tops of them. A small table stands against the wall on the other side of the door. A flickering candle on this table causes shadows of the busts on the wall and ceiling. A wicker cot stands near to the table but not against the

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wall; it has been drawn out toward the center of the floor. There are also two or three large wicker chairs. The cover on the cot, the curtain on the door, and the cushions on the chairs and window-seat are all made from the same material, neatly and simply stenciled. The rugs on the floor harmonize with these both in color and design. Framed prints of classical paintings, including the Mona Lisa, hang on the wall above the table. There is another door in the right wall; it opens into a garden. The Ninety-first Psalm hangs between this door and the window. A large desk and a chair stand directly before the window. An oil-lamp is burning on the desk. The room seems small and modestly furnished when compared to the elaborate massiveness of the interior scene shown in the preceding Act, but the spirit of peace and happiness hovers over all.

Templeton is seated at the desk just as we met him in the First Act. He wears soft gray trousers and a dark blue velvet jacket. Jeanette, in a simple white dress and white canvas shoes, lies sleeping on the cot.

After a while, he rises from the desk, walks toward the cot, and gazes in true admiration on her beautiful face. She wakes suddenly, and he sits down beside her taking her hand.)

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JEANETTE

I just had a very queer dream: it seemed there was a knock at the door, and when I answered it I found a snake curled up on the door mat. Usually I fear them, but this one appeared harmless, trampled, torn, crushed, almost lifeless, and, in spite of the repulsion I once felt for it, I pitied the poor creature; I refreshed it with cool water; it opened its eyes and licked my hand; the *poison* must have been removed because I feared it not.

(There is a feeble rap on the door. Jeanette rises, and Templeton crosses the room to answer it.

Adder enters, but we do not recognize him owing to a pitiful change in his appearance: his eyes have lost their fire; his face is pale; his cheeks are hollow. He is no longer the picture of health that once pleased our eyes, but his defacement appears more reparable than the hardened features we first saw in Ralph Lyon. Both men have been swamped in evil, but Adder, fortunately, has been rescued before the stain from the mire has permeated his entire being.)

ADDER

(after a short silence)

May one ask for guidance here?

TEMPLETON

We are only too glad to help the passer-by. We have purposely located our dwelling on an elevation

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so that any wanderer who has lost his way in the valley below may quickly find us if he will only look upward.

(He carries a chair forward.)

Sit down, my friend; you are tired.

JEANETTE

And thirsty too. I shall draw some fresh water.

(She crosses the floor before Adder, and leaves by the door through which he entered. He follows her with his eyes, and after she disappears he sinks into the chair with a painful sigh.)

ADDER

Yes; I am both tired and thirsty—tired of the worthless life I have been leading, thirsty for a new one, thirsty for all that is right and good, thirsty for—

(Jeanette returns with a stone cup filled with water.

She offers it to him. He drinks, and returns the vessel.)

Thank you; thank you very much. This is the first real kindness that has been shown me in a long while; it is the act, more than the cool water, which refreshes my burning soul. Would that I could express my gratitude by kissing your kindly hand.

(Jeanette non-reluctantly extends her hand. Adder reaches for it, but draws back immediately.)

No, no. To a woman of her purity, my touch

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would be as repulsive as the sting of a serpent. I cannot. I cannot.

(He covers his face with his hands. Templeton signals to Jeanette to leave the room. She carries the cup to the table, takes up the candle, and disappears behind the curtain on the door. Templeton takes his position behind Adder's chair, and pats him amicably on the shoulder.)

TEMPLETON

Come, come; brace up. I realize your position.

ADDER

Then you recognize me?

TEMPLETON

As one in many who have gone astray.

ADDER

But do you not recall that I was once your neighbor?

TEMPLETON

We are all neighbors. We are the people of a vast neighborhood working toward ultimate good. Even our sinners contribute toward this end in that we all profit by their reckless mistakes. Indeed, our common progress is retarded not by the existing wrongs we are trying to rectify, but by the ingratitude, the ridicule, the opposition and the slander which are constantly being thrown across the path our benefactors are clearing.

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ADDER

I regret deeply all I have said about you. I know you must hate me for it.

TEMPLETON

Why should I hate you? What good would that do? What you said was false, and it is only the truth that hurts. You have not harmed me, my dear friend; you have injured only yourself, and what you need is my sympathy and not my contempt.

ADDER

How kind and considerate you are.

TEMPLETON

It is but the pleasure as well as the duty of a Christian to be so. It is only by helping others that we advance ourselves; scorning them simply leads to our own misery.

ADDER

There is no better example than myself to illustrate the truth of your statement. I recall a classmate of mine—a poor ragged devil, who spent all four years of his college life facing and overcoming obstacles; he fired furnaces to pay the rent for his cold attic room; he waited on tables to earn his food; he kept books for a tailor to get what few cast-off clothes he wore. Little time had he to himself, but in that time he fought and toiled. He had no friends, no pleasure, not even health; he had nothing—nothing but ambition. I used to laugh at

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this man—laugh at his shabby appearance. I avoided his company, and refused to recognize him on the street. What little I said of him behind his back was unkind and false. But now he, who seemed cursed both by fate and by myself, he has made good, while I, who had everything—health, time, money, ability,—have squandered all and am reduced to a miserable, worthless, self-made good-for-nothing.

TEMPLETON

The road to ruin is wide and smooth, but the narrow path to success is full of obstacles. Your classmate has met them one and all; they retarded but did not prevent his progress. Our strength comes mainly through our suffering, and his experience in overcoming one obstacle armed him with a new and stronger determination to conquer the others—including the contempt which you yourself exercised over him.

ADDER

If I had only helped him, then I could look back to at least one good unselfish deed. But no; I cared only for my own happiness and gave no thought to the wretched condition of others. I was worse than a selfish fool! I was a greedy glutton taking more than my fill of beastly pleasures, and, added to all, I was an infernal liar. I tried to win deceptively the love of an innocent girl, and, when she justly cast me off, I insulted her with accusations as false as they were vile.

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TEMPLETON

You refer to—

ADDER

Please don't breathe her name. I deny my ears the pleasure of hearing it; I forbid my lips the honor to speak it. But I am repaid; God knows I am well repaid for it all. My own roommate reports my dishonesty to the faculty, and heralds to the public my relations with a harlot. My university expels me; my body suffers incessant torture from the fearful pain of unsightly diseases; my friends no longer know me; and worst of all—my own mother, who has never drawn me to her heart, disowns me. God help me to forget the man she calls her husband; I curse every dollar he has thrust into my reckless hand; I no longer care to own his name. I long to start anew, for, although I have rendered myself unfit for a husband and a father, I can still be a man—a man earning a deserved existence by his own honest labor. But how—how shall I do it? Look at me; my God! look at me!

TEMPLETON

However black the sky may seem, in time the sun will shine; however wicked our souls appear, if we will but wash away the scum, we shall find good hidden beneath it. (*The faint outlines of distant mountain peaks appear in the fog.*)

ADDER

Is there in me a single virtue?

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TEMPLETON

There is at least one seed of it in every man, and that seed is indestructible: place him where you will,—in the midst of the blackest and deadliest evil,—that seed never loses its latent power. It may seem lost forever, but patience and hope will find it, and, although trampled and crushed, it will sprout and blossom if we warm it and nourish it with sunshine and love.

ADDER

And where must that seed be planted?

TEMPLETON

In fresh sweet soil.

(He points out the open window.)

Yonder on the hillside, the laborers have commenced excavations for the New Church of God. Take up your pick and shovel, and help with its foundation.

ADDER

Must I begin so low?

TEMPLETON

We should all begin at the bottom, and then rise. Some of us rise rapidly; others slowly; and some are content to remain there. But even *their* service is essential, for the whole edifice rests on the foundation which is the product of their labor, and God rewards them with the same salvation he grants to the velvet-robed minister who has climbed to the top of the pulpit.

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ADDER

What chance have I to rise? Fingers will point; eyes will glare; everybody will crush me with their hatred and their sinister thoughts.

TEMPLETON

You misjudge the world. Prove to them first that you are worthy of remission. Work hard and move onward. Each advancing step toward the truth, however small, will stand out all the more brilliantly in contrast to the dark background which you have set up behind you. Your new life gradually begins to glow, then to shine, then to sparkle, and finally becomes so dazzling that the background is no longer visible—it dissolves—it fades. (*The fog is gradually clearing; the mountains become more and more distinct.*)

ADDER

(rising)

I thank you for every word you have told me. They have been words of truth and encouragement. I shall follow your counsel, and to-morrow—no, to-day—I shall start in the ditch, and dig, and dig, and dig.

TEMPLETON

(placing his hands on Adder's shoulders, and looking deeply into his eyes)

You are setting a noble example for the world: you are starting across that bridge which leads from

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mere existence to service, from degeneration to manhood. Your hatred for vice will be all the more bitter because you yourself were once a victim, and have now reformed. The world needs men like you, and God knows there are enough eligible candidates. Let it be your mission and my mission to save them. From this moment let us be brothers working for the same cause. Let us clasp hands in eternal friendship and everlasting fraternity.

ADDER

(clasping Templeton's hand)

Fraternity! Never, until now, have I known the true meaning of the word.

(Jeanette enters through the curtained door.)

TEMPLETON

And here stands another loving soul to help us.

JEANETTE

(holding out her hand to Adder)

And to wish you infinite success.

ADDER

Thank you. Thank you. I should love to touch your hand, sweet lady, but God forbids it.

(Adder starts to walk toward the door, but Templeton arrests him by placing his hand on his shoulder.)

TEMPLETON

Wait. God has already cleansed you. Fear not to take the guiding hand He offers you.

THE ICE LENS

(Adder turns about, walks toward Jeanette, falls on one knee, and, seizing her extended hand, he covers it with kisses. Then he rises, takes his hat, covers his face with his arm, and, sobbing aloud like a child, he feels his way slowly out of the room. Templeton and Jeanette stand motionless until the sobbing dies away in the distance. A delicate pink glow appears in the sky.)

TEMPLETON

He cries because he is happy. He has entered the childhood of a new life, and childhood is the happiest period of all—it is the beginning—the time when there is no past—the time when the future looks brightest—the time when our thoughts are clean and pure.

(He extinguishes the lamp, and watches the changing color of the heavens.)

JEANETTE

He has found the truth. To him, it will be as beautiful as the flowers which the children have culled in the meadows.

(Two children rush in through the open door, one, a girl; the other, a very small boy—a mere baby in "rompers." They are neatly dressed in clean bright clothes, and carry large bunches of daisies in their arms. Templeton and Jeanette join them in singing and dancing around the flowers which they have scattered on the floor in the center of the room.)

THE ICE LENS

GIRL

(to Jeanette)

We came to turn you into a fairy.

JEANETTE

How jolly! and what would you have me do?

GIRL

Sit right here on the floor, and take down your hair.

(Jeanette obeys letting her hair fall gracefully over her shoulders.)

Now, Brother, you must sit down also.

TEMPLETON

(squatting on the floor and taking the baby boy on his knee)

Brother and I will be two little brownies sitting on a log and peeping and smiling.

GIRL

You're too big for a brownie—let Brother be the brownie, and you be the log.

TEMPLETON

Good idea! That is much better.

(Templeton lies down on his back, and the girl places the little boy astride his stomach.)

GIRL

There; that's fine. You make such a good log, and you're so willing about it too.

TEMPLETON

Does your father ever play log for you?

THE ICE LENS

GIRL

(standing behind Jeanette and arranging her hair)

Yes; he does almost everything for us now. Mother is so glad he is happy again. He used to be so cranky because he had no money. Sometimes I thought he was going to eat both Brother and me with one bite—but that wouldn't have made him feel any better; would it? Brother alone, without me, would have felt heavy on his tummy.

TEMPLETON

(who is in a position to judge)

I should say so.

GIRL

But one night he came home all in smiles. He told Mother that money wasn't everything, and that we were going to be just as happy without it; and he came over to my bed, and woke me up, and tickled me, and said, "Laugh, Mary; laugh!" and, sleepy as I was, I laughed so loud that I woke Brother up, and Father took us both in his arms, and kissed us all over. And then he went into Mother's room, and I heard him say: "Thank God; we've got a home that rings with children's laughter."

(Metcalf rushes into the room, happy and smiling.

He wears a very respectable-looking suit and a new straw hat with a rather brilliant band.)

METCALF

Good morning, everybody.

THE ICE LENS

TEMPLETON

(rising to a sitting posture, and taking Brother on his lap)

Good morning; you are just in time to see the fairy appear. Come sit down, and join us.

GIRL

Yes; there ought to be a grasshopper looking on too, or you might be a bullfrog, or even a nice big fat caterpillar.

JEANETTE

(who has just finished making a wreath from the daisies)

Why didn't you bring Mrs. Metcalf along? She might have served as a butterfly.

METCALF

(taking his seat on the floor among the others)

I left her at home taking a much needed rest—we have a maid now you know.

GIRL

(placing the wreath on Jeanette's head, and fastening it to her hair with other daisies)

And Mother gets time to tell us such nice stories.

METCALF

Yes, and time to read them too; we take *The Ladies' Home Journal* now—a dollar and a half per year. After dinner these days, Kate takes that instead of the dishcloth.

THE ICE LENS

JEANETTE

We were so glad to hear your salary was increased.

METCALF

And it's a happy family we are; isn't it, Brother?
(*He relieves Templeton by taking the boy in his own arms.*)

We all have new souls—I bought four pairs of shoes last week.

GIRL

You ought to see mine. They are too cute for words—white ones with little blue bows. And look at Brother's—he was allowed to wear his because Father carried him most of the way.

JEANETTE

Come over to me, Brother, and let me see them.
(*The boy totters across the floor, and Jeanette catches him in her arms.*)

GIRL

But our shoes aren't in it with Mother's Easter bonnet.

METCALF

Her first hat in five years. Kate always had to trim her own hats—last Easter she used chicken feathers. (*Laughter.*) It may sound queer but it looked almost as swell as these Parisian roof-gardens with their *imported* cocktails. Kate has some head—she has a certain knack of making something out

THE ICE LENS

of almost nothing. Would you believe that Mary's dress, there, was made out of our front-room curtain, and Brother's belt is an old tie of mine. Kate is a *real* mother—she does everything she can for my boy and girl, and that's why I sacrificed a great part of last month's pay to get her that new bonnet with the blue plumes and forget-me-nots.

TEMPLETON

Have you something to harmonize with it?

METCALF

(holding up his straw hat with the bright blue band)
Yes.

TEMPLETON

You must look charming when you go out walking together.

METCALF

Yes; we hope to be taken into society by next fall. Kate has already had an invitation to a church social—she's going to furnish the doughnuts. I suppose I shall have to learn all over again how to act in company. I've grown pretty rusty in that line—when we went to the theatre the other night, I was so fussed that when the usher asked me for the seat checks I reached into my pocket and handed him Kate's false teeth. (*Laughter*) You see she is not altogether used to her new set, and I carry the old ones along in case she has to do any eating—we each had a sandwich and a glass of lemonade after the performance. Living high these days!

THE ICE LENS

TEMPLETON

I am glad to find you looking at the brighter side of life.

METCALF

Since I have paid back all that money I borrowed for my education, I am feeling happy as a lark.

JEANETTE

And you look like one too in all your new plumage.

METCALF

It is remarkable what clothes will do—just outside the door I met one of my students, and he actually recognized me.

TEMPLETON

There comes a time in every man's life when he realizes the truth in the principle of equality. The student you have mentioned has paid for his folly.

METCALF

If I had owned these clothes sooner, I believe I could have done that fellow more good—I might have helped in part toward avoiding his ruin.

JEANETTE

In what way, Mr. Metcalf?

METCALF

The more respectable a teacher appears, the more he impresses a student with his knowledge. How can we expect these fashionable youths to be in-

THE ICE LENS

spired by a sour-faced pedagogue in a worm-eaten suit and a soup-stained necktie even though he knows forward and backward the cause of every natural phenomenon? These boys get the idea that serious study must invariably result in deterioration, and that deep thinking is but the mania of a freak. There are some over-paid geniuses whose hair goes to seed and whose trousers bag at the knee on account of their inexcusable recklessness, but there are many other more evenly balanced *teachers*, with pride as well as sense, whose features have become haggard and whose clothes have grown shiny from ill-paid labor and unavoidable parsimony. Over half the money donated to educational institutions is misused; stately recitation halls and stately laboratories will never serve in turning the head of youth from folly to study unless we place (*He rises, and strikes a stately pose,*) stately teachers within them.

JEANETTE

Bravo.

METCALF

I believe the modern notion of a university is radically wrong, and I think my opinion is confirmed by the poor results we obtain. The whole system should undergo a revolution: less fuss over the hobbies of genius, and more attention to the enlightenment of the masses. Research in unknown

THE ICE LENS

fields of learning may demand the sacrifice of teaching ability on the part of the investigator, but it should *not* usurp the positions and the salaries which are connected with the more rudimentary instruction of our children. Bring out the teachers —the *real* teachers; encourage more and better men in the teaching profession; pay them enough so they can live respectably and win the admiration of their students. Then our sons will get an education instead of a degree, and our universities will turn out learned and moral men instead of tinkling cymbals and profligates.

JEANETTE

When will your ideas go into effect?

METCALF

When Brother here is ready for college.

JEANETTE

And where will you send him?

METCALF

To that university which is going to take the first step in the right direction. Stand up, Brother, and tell us what you're going to be when you grow up.

BROTHER

(standing upright like the little sprout which develops into a mighty oak)

A man.

METCALF

What kind of a man?

THE ICE LENS

BROTHER

A good man.

METCALF

What else?

BROTHER

A smart man.

METCALF

Is that all?

BROTHER

A YALE man, Daddy.

(Metcalf lifts his little son up on his shoulder, and takes the girl by the hand.)

METCALF

Come along, Kiddies; we must go home to Mother. (to Jeanette) This wasn't intended for a formal call. We were out for a morning climb to see the sunrise, and just dropped in. The next time, I shall bring Kate along with her new bonnet.

(The three of them skip out the door singing their "Good byes." Templeton rises and walks to the window where he waves his handkerchief. Jeanette remains seated on the floor among the field flowers.)

JEANETTE

What a happy family they are.

TEMPLETON

It does my heart good to see them. To work for the happiness of others—that is my mission.

THE ICE LENS

JEANETTE

You have accomplished it, John; why can't you rest and be satisfied?

TEMPLETON

When a man is satisfied with what he has done, and cares to do no more, he has reached his culminating point, and is of no more service to the world in which he lives.

JEANETTE

Yes, John, but surely you have earned your laurel by this time.

TEMPLETON

The laurel wreath that comes with trivial labor soon withers and dies, but the one which is the reward for perpetual service to God remains forever green.

(He gazes in the direction of the distant mountain peaks.)

JEANETTE

But your health and your life?

TEMPLETON

I shall leave that to Him, Jeanette.

(He comes forward with a chair, and sits before her so that he himself faces the open window.)

I lost my parents before I knew what a father or a mother meant. There was only God to watch over me, and why

THE ICE LENS

should he not continue to do so. He has always been my only friend. My principles have not conformed with those of the world, and consequently it turned its back upon me. But the fact that I was not loved only strengthened my desire to love, and the fact that I found the world cold instilled in me a deep longing to warm it. God favored me with both the opportunity and the reward: I was placed among men who were sorely in need of guidance, and, while helping God to reform them, He sent you to assist me—you were the sunshine that brightened my secluded life.

(She rises from the nest of flowers, and, remaining on her knees, places her arms about his neck.)

JEANETTE

I am so glad, John; so glad.

TEMPLETON

(holding her head in his hands)

You, Jeanette, are that little fairy who turns my work into play, and changes my very fatigue into animation. You have brought light to me; I have brought light to you; both of us must continue to bring it to others. We have reached the mountain top, but we must climb still higher that we may see farther, and find those who are lost in the dark valley below us. You ask me to rest, but I cannot; I must climb—climb and take you with me. I am not content to see your head wreathed in daisies;

THE ICE LENS

they were culled in the lowlands—they will soon wilt and fade. But high up on the Alpine summits grows the edelweiss, which is reached only with the expenditure of great effort and even at the risk of life, but, once obtained, it remains fresh and wholesome eternally. Look, Jeanette! See the towering peaks around us—The Thrones of God.

(He points out the open window. She turns her head, and gazes wistfully across the valley.)

On them the air is still purer; the sunshine, even brighter; the edelweiss, more genuine. There must we climb, higher and higher, to gather the blossoms for your crown. And after we reach the highest summit, we shall climb still higher—Heaven is the ultimate goal. And there we shall gather the stars. The stars, Jeanette, shall finally encircle your brow.

JEANETTE

It is wonderful, John; all so wonderful. And I am so happy that God has sent me as a companion to re-animate you for the lofty task in which you serve Him.

TEMPLETON

(drawing her tenderly to his bosom)

I am so grateful that you are able to understand me, Jeanette.

JEANETTE.

It would be selfish to think you belonged to me alone, to think that all your love must be mine.

THE ICE LENS

You appear more noble to me when you share it with others. But I, John, I can love no one but you; all the sunshine my heart and soul can bring is for you alone.

TEMPLETON

But humanity needs your love also, Jeanette. There are times when mine cannot replace it. Even now I can hear a soul crying out to you for help; I can see outstretched arms pleading for your mercy.

JEANETTE

(gradually leaving his arms, and sinking to the floor)

My father. My cruel heartless father. I can never return to him. Never. I vowed that he must come to me.

TEMPLETON

And when you made that vow, you were out of reason just as much as your father was when he disowned you.

JEANETTE

No, John; what I felt was right and truth—what he felt was false.

TEMPLETON

It is for that very reason that you should overlook it. Your father was not himself; he was the victim of evil. He is not entirely to blame.

JEANETTE

How can you take his part when he accused us so fearfully? Oh! why have you recalled it? I

THE ICE LENS

see him now attacking me with every tooth and nail. I shall never be able to forget it. I can never do anything but hate him, hate him, hate him.

TEMPLETON

You should hate evil, Jeanette, and hate it intensely, but do not hate the unfortunate ones who lie strangling under its grip. Rather than condemn man, let us better the conditions under which he lives. In the first place: Who were your father's parents? Wealthy people so thirsty for social prestige that they could give their own child no attention. He never had a true mother's love; he never had a righteous father's counsel. In fact, he was sent away among strangers with nothing but a heavy purse. He went to school, to college. There he acquired both habits and friends—Alas! we call them friends—these "good fellows" who not only boast of their own low deeds, but lead *us* arm in arm to ill fame and ruin.

(Jeanette *begins to show more and more interest.*)

His university—the Alma Mater under whose responsibility his uprightness was shifted—she likewise was too thirsty for showy reputation to take interest in her own son. In her frenzied efforts to expand and to claim the glory of new discoveries and achievements, she ignored his moral education and conferred upon him a degree for the examinations which he passed with his tutor's brains. His ignorant parents applauded his

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victory, and rewarded him with a fortune to last the rest of his days. With a future provided for, he never knew the sweetness of labor, but continued the fatal pleasures of his youth. Without a conscience to guide him, and without a single hand to help him, he sank into the quagmire of evil—lower, lower, lower.

(With these words, she gradually lowers her head on his knee and begins to sob.)

Now, Jeanette, you understand why I said he was not entirely to blame. Of course he has sinned, but you and I both know that he has been punished and suffers. But remember, his sins are indirectly the cause of your happiness, which seems all the brighter in contrast with his sorrow. Is it not only human, Jeanette, that those who are benefited by the mistakes of others should, if not share, at least do all they can to relieve the pang of the transgressor rather than increase it by spurning him? Your father now realizes his error, and he is working hard to reach you and admit it. This very moment he is climbing the mountain side—the mountain of truth and light. Are you going to help or hinder him?

JEANETTE

(rising, and drying her tears)

I shall go and help him, John; help him all I can. I should have done it long ago. Poor unfortunate father!

THE ICE LENS

TEMPLETON

(rising, and taking her in his arms)

It is the glorious spirit of God within you.

(The strains of Mendelssohn's "Spring Song" set the air in rapturous vibration; the flowers on the window-sill nod happily as a fragrant breeze blows over them.

Jeanette flutters out through the open door like a bird.

Templeton returns to his desk, and writes.

The distant mountain peaks seem nearer than before. The first quivering ray of the rising sun escapes from behind the eastern range, and falls upon the neighboring summits. They sparkle like diadems suspended in the heavens, reflecting a flood of golden light symbolic of the exultation of God.)



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